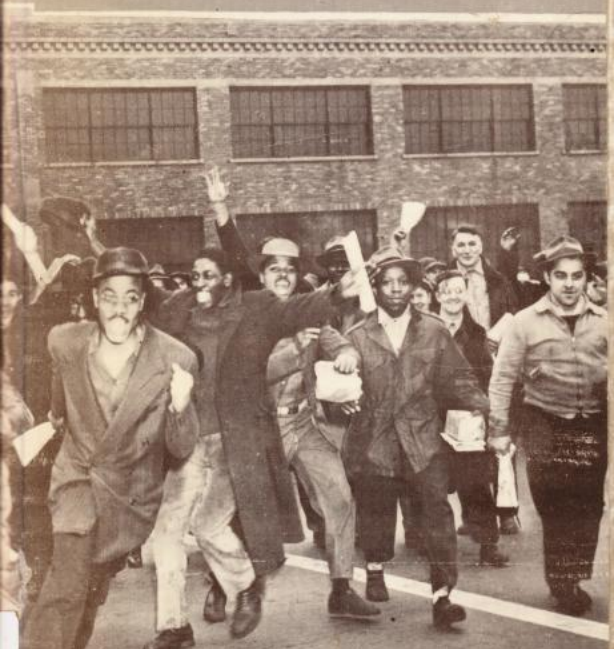
Wartime Strikes

Martin Glaberman



The struggle against the no-strike pledge in the UAW during World War II

Shift change at the Ford Rouge plant. (Ford Archives)

WARTIME STRIKES

The Struggle Against the No-Strike Pledge In the UAW During World War II

Martin Glaberman

bewick/ed
Detroit, Michigan
1980

To

Jessie

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by

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Cover design by Peter Glaberman

Cover photo: Detroit Chevrolet workers
starting wildcat strike, 1943.
Detroit News photo.

Bewick Editions
1443 Bewick
Detroit, Michigan 48214

ISBN 0-935589-11-0

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FOREWORD

Two objectives are intended in this study of strikes in the American auto industry during World War II. The first is to present the history of the struggle against the no-strike pledge in the United Auto Workers of America (UAW) and the organization of the Rank and File Caucus. This is a history which has considerable significance in understanding the American labor movement and the American working class, and it has not yet been recorded.

The second is an analysis of the question of working class consciousness in the light of this experience. The study of the wildcat strikes during World War II provides a valuable and distinct angle of vision from which to examine a question that has concerned labor scholars, Marxists and labor activists for as long as people have been concerned with the nature of the working class. What is the nature of working class consciousness and how does it relate to the question of whether the working class has the capacity to transform modern society?

The record of strikes during the second World War, which saw more strikes than at any other time in the history of the American working class, and a referendum of the membership of the United Auto Workers Union on the subject of a pledge not to strike, provide a unique opportunity to compare and to contrast working class activity with working class statements of belief. The events described tend to contradict the received wisdom of both social scientists and political activists.

Hopefully, this study will be useful to all who are interested in the American working class.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have received various kinds of assistance and encouragement in the preparation of this study. I am deeply appreciative of the support and encouragement of Robb Burlage and Leonard Rodberg of the Union Graduate School and the

Public Resource Center. I am grateful to George P. Rawick, Staughton Lynd, Frank Marquart, David Montgomery and Ken Lawrence for comments, criticism and advice.

The staff of the Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs of Wayne State University were more than courteous and cooperative — their assistance was invaluable.

Archival research, however, is not without its hurdles and barriers. Frank Marquart, for many years a labor educator of note and the author of *An Auto Worker's Journal*, wrote to me after reading the draft of this book: "You were luckier than I was — you were allowed access to the UAW oral histories. I was denied that privilege on the ground that I am not an accredited scholar. . . . I could have added another meaty chapter to my book if I had been allowed to pore through some of those oral histories, especially those that were recorded by people from Locals for which I worked. Such is life. . . ." (Letter of August 9, 1976.) The restrictions on access to the oral histories were established by an academic committee separate from the staff of the Wayne State University Archives and these restrictions have since been relaxed. However, the problem remains. Donors, academics and others often restrict access to archival records. That union and labor records should not be available, not just to scholars, but to any working man or woman seems to me to be an inversion of the purpose and meaning of labor archives.

I am also appreciative of the assistance of the staff of the library of the John F. Kennedy Institute of American Studies of the Free University of Berlin.

In a broader perspective, I owe to C. L. R. James much of the political views and methodology which inform this study. To comrades and colleagues in the struggle in the UAW, to Johnny Zupan, Jack Palmer, Jessie Glaberman, Morgan Goodson and others whom I would only embarrass by naming, I owe what I have learned about the working class and the labor movement.

1

TAKING THE PLEDGE

In mid-June of 1941 a strike was called at the Philadelphia plant of Phillie Cigars (America's 5¢ Cigar). It was organized by a CIO union to gain recognition and improved conditions for the cigar workers. These were mostly women, working for less than $12 a week, in a plant where heat and humidity were kept artificially high to protect the tobacco leaf and where rest periods were supposed to be used to clean the machines of tobacco scraps. The union organizer had come down from New York. He was sympathetic to the policies of the Communist Party.

On June 22, 1941 the German army crossed the border into the Soviet Union, ending the period of the Hitler-Stalin pact. The following day the union organizer called off the strike. The women, who had felt close to victory, continued picketing for the remainder of the day, knowing that without the support of the union their cause was lost. Many of them cried as they picketed. It was years before the workers in that plant would have anything to do with a union again.[1]

At the beginning of December in 1941, a strike was begun at the Spring Perch Company in Lackawanna, N.Y., a manufacturer of springs for Army trucks and tractors. On December 7, 1941 Japanese forces attacked Pearl Harbor. On the following day the strike was called off "in view of the grave and serious change in the international situation."[2] Strikes were also called off at a shell loading plant in Ravenna, Ohio,[3] and at an ordnance plant in Morgantown, W.Va.[4]

In this way did two wings of the American labor movement react to military invasions. The reaction, however, was far from representative of what workers did on those occasions. More and larger strikes continued than were called off.

One strike call for a national strike of welders by an independent union, called off on December 7, was renewed on December 8.[5] The most disciplined and consistent response came from the top leadership of organized labor.

Almost all elements in the labor movement rushed to pledge support for the war and to pledge labor peace. Perhaps the most hysterical response came from the New Jersey State CIO, a body with substantial Communist influence, which was meeting in convention at the time of Pearl Harbor. "The convention pledged 'every needed sacrifice of our labor, our fortunes and our lives to defeat this new menace to our national security.'

"Wild excitement pervaded the hall, and the 579 delegates were on their feet stamping and screaming, as the resolution hastily drawn by the resolutions committee was adopted without a dissenting vote."[6] The convention also attacked John L. Lewis as "subversive of the national security of our country."[7] Presumably this was for the successful 1941 mine strike which gained union security in the captive mines owned by the steel and railroad companies and for Lewis' refusal to give uncritical support to the Roosevelt administration's moves toward war.

Most of the labor leadership reacted quickly, but more moderately, to the new situation created on December 7, 1941. William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), called a meeting of the AFL Executive Council for December 9 to deal with the situation. In the meantime he said, "Labor knows its duty. It will do its duty, and more. No new laws are necessary to prevent strikes. Labor will see to that. American workers will now produce as the workers of no other country have ever produced."[8]

In a radio speech on December 8, Philip Murray, president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), said that CIO members "were ready and eager to do their utmost to defend our country against the outrageous aggression of Japanese imperialism, and to secure the final defeat of the forces of Hitler." He was, however, careful to note that "they of course expect reciprocity, and that no selfish advantage will be taken of the sacrifices they are prepared to make."[9]

It should be noted at this point that the somewhat greater concern for the rights of their members evidenced in

the CIO statement offering the sacrifices of the workers proved to be purely verbal. In the event, it was the AFL which clung a bit more tenaciously to traditional union rights such as overtime pay.

John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers (at that time a member of the CIO), joined the chorus with a statement supporting the government and the war effort.

The International Executive Board of the United Automobile Workers (CIO) was meeting in New York City during these first days of war. It passed a resolution, made public by the president of the union, R. J. Thomas, which pledged support of the government and assured uninterrupted production.[10]

On December 11, 1941, President Roosevelt called for a meeting of twenty-four representatives of labor and industry to reach agreement on a war labor policy that would "prevent the interruption of production by labor disputes during the period of the war."[11] In advance of this meeting, the AFL Executive Council on December 15 unanimously voted a no-strike policy in war industries.[12] On the following day, the *N.Y. Times* reported, 100 leaders of AFL unions extended that policy to their entire 5 million membership.[13]

The meetings of the labor and management representatives (separately, at the start) began on December 17.[14] Out of these meetings came an unconditional no-strike pledge from organized labor and a no-lockout pledge from management. The meetings, however, foundered on the refusal of the management representatives to accept any kind of union security. The unions, on the other hand, could not afford to give up some form of union security going into a period when they were likely to win very little for their memberships.[15] Roosevelt, although disappointed at the failure to agree, simply accepted those points on which there had been agreement and dismissed the conference. He rejected "industry's demand that the closed shop be ruled out as an arbitrable question." The President codified the conclusions of the conference as follows:

"1. There shall be no strikes or lockouts.

"2. All disputes shall be settled by peaceful means.

"3. The President shall set up a proper War Labor Board to handle these disputes."[16]

The leaders of labor rushed to accept the President's decision and agreed to serve on the War Labor Board, a board that recreated the National Defense Labor Board with equal representation for labor, management and a mythical public (that is to say, the government). This was rather a precipitous retreat, despite the modest victory on union security,* since it was only at the beginning of December 1941 that Murray of the CIO and the Steelworkers and Kennedy of the Miners had destroyed the old tri-partite National Defense Labor Board by confirming their resignations and refusals to serve as a result of the board's rejection of union security for the UMW in the captive mine strike.[17] The miners, in other words, had won union security by destroying the board.

One of the interesting aspects of the adoption of the no-strike pledge was that no union bothered to consult its membership in advance, and very few bothered to consult

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*The victory was for the unions but not necessarily for working people.

"By and large, the maintenance of a stable union membership makes for the maintenance of responsible union leadership and responsible union discipline, makes for keeping faithfully the terms of the contract, and provides a stable basis for union-management cooperation for more efficient production. If union leadership is responsible and cooperative, then irresponsible and uncooperative members cannot escape discipline by getting out of the union and thus disrupt relations and hamper production. . . .

"The time, thought, and energy given in tense struggles for the organization, maintenance of membership, and collection of dues, necessary and educationally valuable as they are, should as fairly and wisely as possible now be concentrated on winning the war." Public member Frank P. Graham in Republic Steel Corporation, etc., 1 *War Lab. Rep.* 325, 340-41, July 16, 1942. Quoted in Seidman, see note 15, page 101.

Naturally, there is not a word in all this about making union leaders more responsible to their members or about subjecting union bureaucrats to the discipline of their members. These views, which are virtually universally held among union officials, government officials, labor relations people and most corporate executives, are eloquent testimony to the fact that union members are assumed to be more radical than union leaders. These views make no sense on any other assumption.

afterward.

One of the unions that did consult its membership, although a more accurate description of the process would be to sell its membership, was the UAW. At a meeting of the UAW Executive Board in Cleveland on March 28, 1942, the UAW leaders displayed hardly any confidence in the patriotism and willingness to sacrifice of the auto workers.

> President Thomas recommended to the Board the unanimous adoption of this program of the CIO — the giving up of double time for Sundays and holidays as such and that we, however, still insist upon time and one-half for work over 8 hours a day and 40 hours a week.
>
> Secretary Addes pointed out to the Board that the CIO's position was not totally favorable and acceptable to the rank and file. Perhaps because the rank and file did not understand the position of the CIO. Secretary Addes then read to the Board the program that the Defense Employment Committee of the UAW-CIO was advocating.... [The "Victory Through Equality of Sacrifice" program.]
>
> Secretary Addes explained that in substance this program of the UAW-CIO's Defense Employment Committee was similar to that of the CIO. The rank and file does not seriously realize or appreciate the grave predicament of our country and, therefore, is not prepared to forfeit its overtime provisions. The Defense Employment Committee does not intend to publicize this program. It merely asks the Board to support it and that a letter of explanation of our position on this question of premium pay for overtime be directed to Donald M. Nelson under the signature of President Thomas.
>
> Secretary Addes also stated to the Board that the Defense Employment Committee proposed calling a national conference of representatives of all our locals to explain this program to our people and obtain their support — That we must give up overtime for Sundays, Saturdays and Holidays as such — That we insist government take steps to prevent inflation which is caused by the rise in the cost of living — That industry's profits be limited — And that in the end if Labor is to sacrifice so must industry....
>
> Secretary Addes reiterated, that the program would not be publicized nor would it be sent out to the locals. The committee is of the opinion that at the National

> Conference called to discuss this matter the program be then distributed. Should the Board agree the conference could be called for April 7 and 8 and representation allotted on the basis of per capita tax payment. Further, that the representatives, because of the brevity of time, be *selected* and not *elected* and such representatives be chosen from the bargaining committees and executive officers wherever possible.[18]

The appropriate motions were made (mostly by Addes), supported (mostly by Walter Reuther), and routinely carried. It should be noted that the minutes of the UAW Executive Board are not secret (although they are not widely circulated) and that the formulations used in reporting discussions are often self-serving. In any case, the Board decided to combat the lack of understanding of the membership by refusing to permit them to elect the delegates to the special conference and by refusing to permit either the members or the delegates to study in advance the program that was to be presented to the conference. It might very well be that the tactics used by the leadership in preparing for the April conference were recognition that the ranks of the UAW were aware of the unilateral concessions being made by the leaders of the UAW (and of the CIO and AFL generally) and of growing resistance and growing militancy in the rank and file.[19]

John McGill, a delegate from the Flint, Mich., Buick local, recalled that

> There was much opposition to [the Equality of Sacrifice program] at that time. In fact, we thought we had it beat at one time and we adjourned for lunch and the heads got together and came back and shot the big guns off in the afternoon and undid everything that we did before noon. . . . They finally put it to a vote in the afternoon and we lost out. I was one of the opposition to the Equality of Sacrifice program. . . . George Addes[20] . . . [came] to me and asked me not to speak against it and I refused. I told him that if I could get the floor, I was certainly going to represent the local union that sent me down here and that was for the purpose of defeating the Equality of Sacrifice program because we figured that there would be no such thing as equality of sacrifice. We just did not believe that.

> The only ones that were going to sacrifice would be the workers themselves and the coupon clippers would soon get their take even during wartime. . . . That was our first no-strike pledge. It was not written into the contracts at that time,[21] but I predicted and a lot of other guys predicted at that time that anytime we ever gave up our right to strike, it would eventually be written into our contracts and the GM contract bears that out. . . . The only effective weapon the worker has and we gave it away.[22]

The tactics used at the conference by the leadership included the implication that giving up premium pay for Saturdays and Sundays was conditional on acceptance of the whole program. The Equality of Sacrifice program included a prohibition of war profits, a $25,000 ceiling on salaries, control of inflation, rationing of necessities, and so on. Just before the vote a letter that President Roosevelt had sent to the conference was read a second time and then Richard Frankensteen, a Vice President of the UAW, shouted at the delegates, "Are you going to tell the President of the United States to go to hell?"[23] The program giving up overtime pay was adopted, with 150 delegates voting in the opposition.

Relinquishing premium pay ultimately proved an embarrassment to the UAW and the CIO. The AFL was not quite as generous and, as a result, in attempts to organize the aircraft industry, the UAW was having difficulty, losing elections to the AFL International Association of Machinists. The difficulties faced by CIO unions, attempting to organize plants against their AFL rivals, ultimately forced on Philip Murray, President of the CIO, the humiliation of having to demand that the government enforce a general ban on premium pay for Saturdays and Sundays, to equalize the situation. Nelson Lichtenstein notes:

> A 1942 contest between the UAW and the International Association of Machinists provides a graphic example of this wartime phenomenon. Under the prodding of Walter Reuther and Richard Frankensteen and at the request of the government, the UAW agreed to relinquish certain types of overtime pay in the interests of a general "Victory Through Equality of Sacrifice" program. UAW organizers thought this plan would help organize new war workers through its patriotic appeal. For example they

told Southern California aircraft workers: "The best way (you) can speed up war production, and contribute even more to the war effort, is to join the CIO, which has made this business of winning the war its main objective."

In contrast the machinists' union emphasized wages and hours and the maintenance of overtime pay standards. The IAM attacked the UAW: "Can the CIO's masterminds tell you why they know what's good for the worker better than he knows himself? . . . the CIO sacrifices workers' pay, workers' overtime as the CIO's contribution to the war effort. Big of them, huh?" In a series of 1942 NLRB elections the IAM decisively defeated the UAW on this issue. UAW and CIO leaders who had pitched their election campaigns on an exclusively patriotic level were stunned. In defeat they quickly appealed to the WLB and to the Administration, not to restore overtime pay, but to force the IAM and the rest of the AFL to give it up as well. This FDR soon did by issuing a special executive order on this problem.[24]

It all pointed up the stupidity of one of the arguments of the union leaders in this, as well as the giving up of the right to strike: the government will move against labor in wartime and legally restrict our overtime benefits and our right to strike. To prevent this, the remarkable strategy of surrendering these rights voluntarily was put forward.

This seeming contradiction between the supposedly conservative AFL versus the supposedly militant CIO exposes one facet of what has come to be called "social unionism." The concerns of union leaders (especially such as Walter P. Reuther) who went beyond the traditional bread and butter unionism of the AFL to deal with general social questions have often been misunderstood as a sign of greater militancy. More often, it was simply a tendency to move the labor movement in the direction of incorporation into the structure of the "welfare state." Social unionism represented the demands of the state for the social control of the workers at least as much as it represented the generalized interests of the membership of the unions.

The adoption of the no-strike pledge by the leaders of the major unions seems like a sharper turn in labor policy than it is in reality. The outbreak of war, the public demands of government officials for labor peace, the statements and

Wartime leaders of the UAW: President R. J. Thomas, Secretary-Treasurer George Addes, Vice Presidents Walter Reuther and Richard T. Frankensteen. (Wayne State University Labor Archives)

resolutions of labor leaders, the fact that major strikes for union recognition were still taking place, all combine to exaggerate the degree of change involved in the no-strike policy.

The conflict between militant unionists and UAW leaders seeking to limit the independent activity of the membership dates back to the organizing days of the union. Leaders were unhappy when they had to follow the time-table of spontaneous strikes, set by workers who may not even have been members of the union, rather than their own carefully laid plans. The conflict remained after the first contracts were signed. The contracts were brief and the grievance procedures were only sketchily outlined. The initiative in many cases remained with the workers on the shop floor. Departmental wildcats in which all the workers joined with the steward in bargaining on a grievance were both common and effective.[25] The first major step to restrict the right of workers to strike came at General Motors. The leaders of the UAW, including Walter Reuther, Wyndham Mortimer and Homer Martin, reached an understanding with GM on the disciplining of wildcat strikers.[26] The effect of the agreement was to make it easier for the company to fire strikers and to erode the power of workers on the shop floor.

The union moved in two ways to inhibit the right to strike. In the union constitution the right to authorize strikes was ultimately vested in the International Executive Board. Even a legal vote to strike by the membership of a local union was no longer enough. If approval of the Executive Board was not forthcoming, any strike would be wildcat, or illegal. In addition, no-strike clauses were incorporated into contracts with the corporations which prohibited most strikes during the life of the contract.

Article 24 of the 1941 UAW Constitution deals with strikes. The significant sections of that article are as follows:

> *Section 2.* If the Local Union involved is unable to reach an agreement with the employer without strike action, the Recording Secretary of the Local Union shall prepare a full statement of the matters in controversy and forward the same to the Regional Director and International President. The Regional Director or his assigned representative in conjunction with the Local Union Committee shall attempt to effect a settlement. Upon failure

to effect a settlement he shall send the International President his recommendation of approval or disapproval of a strike. Upon receipt of the statement of matters in controversy from the Regional Director, the International President shall prepare and forward a copy thereof to each member of the International Executive Board together with a request for their vote upon the question of approving a strike of those involved to enforce their decision in relation thereto. Upon receipt of the vote of the members of the International Executive Board, the International President shall forthwith notify in writing the Regional Director and the Local Union of the decision of the International Executive Board.

Section 3. In case of an emergency where delay would seriously jeopardize the welfare of those involved, the International President, after consultation with the other International Officer, may approve a strike pending the submission to, and securing the approval of, the International Executive Board, provided such authorization shall be in writing.

Section 4. Before a strike shall be called off, a special meeting of the Local Union shall be called for that purpose, and it shall require a majority vote by secret ballot of all members present to decide the question either way. Wherever the International Executive Board decides that it is unwise to longer continue an existing strike, it will order all members of Local Unions who have ceased work in connection therewith to resume work and thereupon and thereafter all assistance from the International Union shall cease.

Any Local Union engaging in a strike which is called in violation of this Constitution and without authorization of the International President and/or the International Executive Board shall have no claim for financial or organizational assistance from the International Union or any affiliated Local Union.

The International President, with the approval of the International Executive Board shall be empowered to revoke the charter of any Local Union engaging in such unauthorized strike action, thereby annulling all privileges, powers and rights of such Local Union under this Constitution.

The following is an example of the no-strike clause taken from the wartime UAW contract with the Packard

Motor Car Co. It is representative of most such clauses, being rather simpler and briefer than they have since become.

> *Article XIII — General*
>
> The Union will not cause or permit its members to cause, nor will any member of the union take part in any strike, either sit-down, stay-in, or any other kind of strike or other interference, or any other stoppage, total or partial, of any of the company operations.

It must be noted that this clause at Packard was more wish than fact. It was widely ignored by Packard workers during the war years. But it did embody the purpose of the union leadership, a purpose they shared with management. In larger corporations, where an umpire was provided under the contract, the strike prohibition was extended absolutely to all subjects on which the umpire was entitled to rule.*

---

*"Strikes and Stoppages

"(1) It is the intent of the parties to this Agreement that the procedures herein shall serve as a means for peaceable settlement of all disputes that may arise between them.

"(2) During the life of this Agreement, the Union will not cause or permit its members to cause, nor will any member of the Union take part in, any sit-down, stay-in or slow-down, in any plant of the Corporation, or any curtailment of work or restriction of production of the Corporation. The Union will not cause or permit its members to cause nor will any member of the Union take part in any strike or stoppage of any of the Corporation's operations or picket any of the Corporation's plants or premises until all the bargaining procedure as outlined in this Agreement has been exhausted, and in no case on which the Umpire shall have ruled, and in no other case on which the Umpire is not empowered to rule until after negotiations have continued for at least five days at the third step of the Grievance Procedure and not even then unless sanctioned by the International Union, United Automobile Workers of America, C.I.O. In case a strike or stoppage of production shall occur, the Corporation has the option of cancelling the Agreement at any time between the tenth day after the strike occurs and the day of its settlement. The Corporation reserves the right to discipline any employee taking part in any violation of this Section of the Agreement.

"(3) The Union has requested this National Agreement in place of

Control of wildcat strikes had been a continuing problem before the outbreak of war. A discussion at a special meeting of the UAW International Executive Board in Detroit on February 7, 1941 is indicative:

> The next issue discussed by President Thomas was the various unauthorized strikes or so-called departmental sit-downs which were taking place in a number of the plants. He then related to the Board his recent experience in the Briggs plant at which time one of the Chief Steward [sic] openly flaunted the fact that he just closed his department, without first consulting his superior officers or the International. In view of this instance and similar other minor occurrences Pres. Thomas informed the Board that a letter was issued from his Office stating very definitely that the International would not support nor partake in any future unauthorized strikes. To date, President Thomas was happy to report that apparently the letter had some affect [sic] since no such trouble has been encountered in the plant.
>
> (Considerable discussion followed as to what policy the International Union should adopt in such instances and it was the consensus of opinion that the International had been too lenient and should in the future assume a firm stand on these matters.)[27]

This discussion might support the suspicions that the leaders of the UAW welcomed government pressure on workers to back up their own attempts to maintain labor peace, despite their public opposition to government restrictions on labor. Interesting also in the above minutes is the phrase "superior officers," which suggests a hierarchy in which power starts at the top and diffuses downward.

In addition to their own bureaucratic need to control their members, the actions of CIO leaders were also governed

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independent agreements for each bargaining unit covered hereby. Accordingly an authorized strike in one bargaining unit under this Agreement which results in an interruption of the flow of material or services to operations in any other bargaining unit under this Agreement, will be considered an authorized strike in any such affected bargaining unit."

UAW-GM Contract, June 24, 1940, pages 36-7

by their desire to be incorporated into the state machine.[28] Although this was presented as a desire to achieve labor representation in the government and on government boards, it quickly developed into government representation in the labor movement rather than the reverse. The leader in this tendency was Sidney Hillman of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, a CIO union. With the Roosevelt administration moving rapidly toward war, the President, on May 28, 1940, established a National Defense Advisory Commission. On this commission was Sidney Hillman, "who was to be in charge of labor under the defense program."[29] Hillman's role was indicated by a remark of Roosevelt's at a conference with the NDAC members at the White House: "Sidney, I expect you to keep labor in step."[30] Hillman functioned, at this stage, primarily as a fireman putting down the strikes, wildcat and otherwise, that interfered with the defense program in 1940 and 1941.[31] He became, simply, Roosevelt's representative in the labor movement.[32]

Other CIO leaders, including the officers of the UAW, followed suit as quickly as they were permitted. For example, at a meeting in Boston in November 1942, the UAW International Executive Board voted unanimously to present a three-point program to the coming CIO convention. "Labor organizations should place greater emphasis on participation in the national war problem than on organizing efforts, the UAW declared."[33]

They would appear to their own members, not as leaders who had been elected to represent the interests of their members, but as politicians whose function it had become to get their members to sacrifice for the war effort. They viewed themselves as patriots first and unionists second. In contrast, with very few exceptions, business leaders never permitted patriotism to interfere with profits. The rush of the UAW and CIO officials to be absorbed into the wartime government bureaucracy was in partial contrast to the leaders of the AFL. AFL bureaucrats, in many ways more conservative than the CIO, nevertheless had an older tradition of avoidance of politics and governmental interference. In their simple business unionism way, they at times refrained from making concessions (such as on the premium pay issue) which seemed to benefit corporate profitability more than the war effort. It is

not that they did not participate on government boards and play the role of government bureaucrats. It is that they were a bit more backward about it. Perhaps they were helped in this by the dictatorial nature of most AFL union constitutions and the fact that they needed less help from the government to control their own membership.[34]

A significant exception during this period was John L. Lewis who, before Pearl Harbor, had forced the CIO representatives to withdraw from the National Defense Mediation Board and successfully defied the board to win union security for the miners' union in the captive mines.

2

CHANGES IN THE LABOR FORCE

The war and the war economy brought about significant changes in the structure and composition of the American working class in general and auto workers in particular. It would be useful to examine how the changes in composition influenced the militancy or lack of it of auto workers or, more generally, how these changes affected the consciousness of workers. Precise determinations cannot be made. The figures on changes in working class composition are not overly precise, the categories used in government statistics are not always the most useful ones, and different sets of figures often present related or overlapping categories rather than identical categories. For example, population figures may be available for selected metropolitan areas and not for others. Figures for employment in particular industries would not necessarily coincide with membership in the UAW. In addition to statistical problems, there are the limitations that are inherent in analytical and theoretical determinations.

Nevertheless, with the understanding that what is being discussed is tendencies and trends rather than precise determinations, an examination of work force changes is worthwhile.

There was a complex movement of working people in the United States as a result of the war. The first significant change in the auto work force was substantial unemployment during the period of changeover from peacetime to war production.[1] In the winter of 1942 and early spring, thousands of auto workers paid in unemployment for the refusal of the auto corporations to adjust their production earlier on any basis other than profitability.[2]

The second significant change was the withdrawal of

young men for military service, a process which began before the outbreak of war when the draft was instituted as part of the government's movement toward war. Almost 30% of the Detroit metropolitan area male work force of March 1940 entered military service.[3] This, of course, is not the same as the auto industry work force where, because of deferments for necessary war production, the proportion of draftees is likely to have been smaller.

And then there was a substantial total addition to the auto industry work force brought about both by shifts in employment within the work force in existing areas of residence and employment and by substantial movement from one region of the country to another. Generally speaking, what was involved was the significant addition to the auto work force of women, southern whites, and southern blacks. However, additions to the work force were not limited to these groups and, even in these categories, there were substantial differences from plant to plant and from city to city.

There were increases in women's employment in all categories except for domestic work.[4] By far the most significant increase was in "operatives," that is, factory work, followed by clerical and related occupations. (See Table 1.) Especially interesting, however, is the movement from one occupation to another. In the Detroit-Willow Run area, most women who worked in the auto industry during the war had worked before the war in other types of occupations. "It is clear that the influx of women into the war industries was largely the transfer of positions, rather than the entrance of a new female labor supply."[5] More details on this transfer of positions for the Detroit-Willow Run area are presented in Tables 2-5.

"The U.A.W., representing workers in the auto and aircraft plants, was an important union for women during the war years. Its membership of between 300,000 and 400,000 women represented approximately one third of the total U.A.W. membership during World War II, and the U.A.W. rivaled the United Electrical Workers as the union with the greatest female membership."[6]

It is clear that the picture of housewives rushing to become Rosie the Riveter and rushing back to the home at the end of the war is inaccurate. Most of the women working in

TABLE 1. Comparison of Women's Employment in 1940 and March 1944, by Major Occupation Groups

Occupation group	Employed women in March 1944 (in thousands)	Net changes since 1940		Percentage distribution	
		Number (in thousands)	Percent	1940	March '44
ALL OCCUPATIONS[1]	16,480	+5,340	+48.0	100.0	100.9[2]
Professional and semi-professional	1,490	+20	+1.2	13.2	9.0
Proprietors, managers, and officials	650	+230	+53.3	3.8	3.9
Clerical and kindred	4,380	+2,010	+84.5	21.3	26.6
Sales	1,240	+460	+58.4	7.0	7.0
Craftsmen, foremen, operatives, and laborers, except farm	4,920	+2,670	+118.7	20.2	29.0
Domestic service	1,570	-400	-20.4	17.7	9.0
Other services	1,650	+390	+30.9	11.3	10.9
Farm workers	560	+90	+18.6	4.2	3.4

1. Figures used for 1940 comprise the employed and also those seeking work who were experienced in the occupation.
2. Total exceeds details, since those in occupations not classifiable are not shown separately.

Source: "Changes in Women's Employment During the War," *Monthly Labor Review*, Nov. 1944, page 1030.

TABLE 2. Number of women employed in 1940 and 1944-45 and percent of increase in Detroit-Willow Run area

Number of employed women		Percent increase
1940	1944-45	1940 to 1944-45
182,300	387,000	112

Source: "Women Workers in Ten War Production Areas and Their Postwar Employment Plans," U.S. Dept. of Labor, Women's Bureau, Bulletin No. 209, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946, page 29.

TABLE 3. Employment status the week before Pearl Harbor of women employed in 1944-45 in Detroit-Willow Run area

Percentage of wartime-employed women with specified types of employment status the week before Pearl Harbor

Total	In the labor force		Not in the labor force	
	Employed	Unemployed and seeking work	Engaged in own housework	In school
100	51	3	28	18

Source: *Ibid.*

TABLE 4. Length of work experience before 1944-45 of women employed in the war period, Detroit-Willow Run area, by percentages

Total	10 years and over	5, less than 10	3, less than 5	2, less than 3	1, less than 2	less than 1
100	22	17	15	11	14	21

Source: *Ibid.*, page 30.

TABLE 5. Number and proportion of women employed in 1944-45 in Detroit-Willow Run area who were in-migrants

Total number employed	In-migrants	
	number	percent of total
387,000	53,000	14

Source: *Ibid.*

war plants had had earlier experience. Some of those who were new to the labor force (many of those who had previously been students) were also oriented toward paid employment, independent of the war. Many of the women who are counted as housewives before wartime employment are also likely to have been excluded from the labor force for lack of reasonably well-paid employment, rather than their personal desires. In terms of behavior in the factories and on the job, what is indicated is that women were an experienced work force, that is, experienced in terms of relations with bosses and with fellow employees, although the particular traditions and practices of the auto industry may have been new.

This was even more true of black women, a larger proportion of whom were in paid employment both before and during the war. "Nearly 1 in 3 Negro women were employed in 1940, in contrast to 1 in 5 white women. By 1944 the proportion of employed Negro women increased to 2 in 5, while the employed white women increased to almost 1 in 3."[7] However, the improvement in employment did not mean that black women had proportional access to the better-paying jobs of the war industries. More often they replaced white women who had moved from service trades into industry.

> Most dominant changes in Negro employment during the 4 years were a marked movement from the farms to the factories, especially to those making war munitions, and a substantial amount of upgrading, but there was little change in the proportions occupied in unskilled jobs.
>
> Slightly over 7 in every 10 employed Negro women were in some service activity in April 1940. The great majority of these (918,000) were domestic employees. After 4 years there was only a slight decrease in the proportion in the services, though a significant internal shift had taken place. While the proportion of domestic employment showed a marked decrease, those occupied in such personal services as beautician, cook, waitress, etc., showed a corresponding increase. The actual number of Negro domestic workers increased slightly between 1940 and 1944, the number in these occupations rising by about 50,000, but this addition was not sufficient to offset the decline of 400,000 among white domestic

employees.[8]

In the auto industry, employment of black women was spotty. In most plants, even those that employed women during the war, they were entirely excluded. In most plants where black women were hired, they were not hired until late in 1942, after the March on Washington movement had forced federal executive action to open defense plants to black workers.

The figures alone, obviously, do not give any indication of the impact of substantial female employment on the activities and consciousness of the working class. Unfortunately, although there has been an increase in interest in working class women during the war years on the part of people in the women's movement, this interest has not yet gone beyond the reporting of what happened to women or what was done to them. What women themselves did, how they acted on the shop floor, has yet to be recorded to any significant degree.

It is possible to piece together certain indications of women's activity. Some auto plants had employed many women before the war. Plants making small parts (AC Spark Plug and Ternstedt Divisions of General Motors, for example) and the cut and sew departments of body plants had employed women before the war. During the war, the proportion of women in any plant varied considerably — the industry-wide average was rarely an indication of the reality in any one plant. It is likely that women functioned differently in situations where they were a small minority (and, generally speaking, dependent on the good will of the male workers), where they were a large minority, and where they were a majority. Both management and union spokesmen used the presence of women as excuse to explain alleged inefficiency — basing themselves on the mythology that working women during the war were essentially middle class housewives who had no industrial discipline.[9] Unions complained that women did not participate in union activities in any great numbers.[10]

It is difficult to judge the extent of women's participation in union activities at this distance. But several things should be noted. The participation of men in union meetings was declining during this same period.[11] (Union leaders

Lunch facilities at a Ford plant, cause of at least one wildcat strike. (Ford Archives)

tended to charge in both cases that the cause was that these were new members who did not understand the union and its struggles from the organizing days. Union leaders are still making these charges today.) There was, among both men and women, more participation in union activity on the shop floor than at the union hall. But shop floor activity (other than steward elections and dues collections) are informal activities which tend to be invisible to bureaucrats. More important for our purposes is the impossibility of equating union activity with militancy, radicalism or political consciousness. There are signs (although these are, admittedly, inadequate) of considerable self-organization, militancy and class struggle in the auto plants during the war years.

One indication of an unwillingness on the part of women workers to subordinate themselves to the demands of management is the practice of organizing production around the need for free time. How widespread it was cannot be measured, but it appears fairly frequently in the recollections of women workers and in the complaints of management. One example is from the Dodge plant in Hamtramck during the war years. The women in a particular department, like most workers working six and seven days, found ways to accomplish the shopping which their work made impossible. They all chipped in to do the work of the restroom matron while she went downtown during working hours with a long shopping list and did the shopping for the whole department.[12] In other cases, it was in-plant services that were involved, hair-cutting and the like, performed by women who had the required skills for women who did not have the time to go to beauty parlors or seamstresses, etc. This was a form of, and extension of, what was generally known as "government work." "Government work," a term which became very general during the years of World War II, was the workers' term for private work. That is, it was work done on company time, with company materials, on company equipment or machines, for the personal use of the worker. (The term seems to me also to embody a rather sophisticated, if cynical, view of the corrupt nature of government contracts.) It involved, whether done by men or women, concealing the work from supervision and, often, a cooperative organization of the required work to make the illegal work possible. It should

be noted in passing that these forms of shop-floor organization and cooperation reflected both the degree of control won by workers just a few years previously in the massive struggles to organize the auto industry and the additional power that workers felt as a result of the labor shortage and the war needs of the government.

There is no evidence available that women refused to take strike action when their fellow workers went on strike. (There is one exception to this: strikes directed against the employment or upgrading of women.) There is also no evidence available that women were more prone to strike action than auto workers generally. There is, however, evidence that some strikes were initiated by women. One such incident is described by Sam Sage, an official of the Wayne County CIO Council, who spent much of his time during the war years attempting to prevent and to break wildcat strikes. He does not indicate the plant involved but he notes that, "On the three-shift operation this caused the second shift, that is the afternoon shift, to get off around 1:30 in the morning. One wildcat that I know of started over the fact that they were getting off at 1:30 and the beer gardens closed at 2:30. They did not get a chance to get to the beer gardens. These were women!"[13]

One of the plants with an extremely high incidence of strikes was Briggs, where, during the war, about 60% of the work force was women.[14] Another example was a wildcat "at the Ford Willow Run plant when women workers refused to wear a company-prescribed suit, 'a blue cover-all thing with three buttons on the back with a drop seat.' When the company began disciplining women who showed up without the suit, the rest of the women struck, and that, apparently, was the end of the suit."[15]

A final determination of the role of women in the wildcat strikes in the auto industry during World War II is not possible at this point. It seems, however, possible to say tentatively that the presence of large numbers of women workers did not significantly alter the level of militancy of the auto workers, either positively or negatively.

A large proportion of auto workers in Michigan and in other parts of the country were migrants from other geographic areas. There seems to have been no uniformity in the

proportions of migrants from certain areas who entered the work force in the north and west. Table 6 indicates the net migration into Michigan by color.

TABLE 6. Estimated net migration by color into Michigan: 1940-50.

White		Nonwhite	
Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent
+146,000	+2.9	+189,000	+87.4

Source: Henry S. Shryrock, Jr., *Population Mobility Within the United States*, Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1964, page 110.

These figures indicate a trend but, since they include over four post-war years during which there may very well have been a much larger black than white migration into Michigan, the trend is not as great as indicated. Table 7 indicates the areas of the country from which white migrants to two Michigan auto centers came. Los Angeles is added by way of comparison.

In the Detroit area, almost one third of the white in-migrants were southerners. The largest single group of in-migrants came from the nearby mid-western industrial states. The proportion of black in-migrants from the south, for which I have no figures, must have been considerably larger since it is not likely that a considerable number of blacks came to Detroit from the northeast or the midwest. However, it is evident that different metropolitan areas showed different migration patterns. Only 16.2% of white in-migrants to Muskegon were from the south, while over three quarters came from the midwest. Centers like Flint, Pontiac, Lansing, etc., had their own patterns. More white southerners came to the towns of the Saginaw valley of east central Michigan than came to western Michigan. Relatively few blacks entered the Muskegon area. More entered the Pontiac-Flint-Bay City area, but fewer, proportionately, than came to the Detroit area.

The areas from which auto workers came do not tell all of the story. Many southerners, black and white, came from agriculture. (See Tables 9, 10, 11 for black employment

TABLE 7. Of Total Influx at Each Center, Percent from Each Section

Centers	Total White Influx	New Eng.	Mid. Atl.	E.N. Cent.	W.N. Cent.	S. Atl.	E.S. Cent.	W.S. Cent.	Mountain	Pacific	Totals
Detroit-Willow Run	207,240	1.5	13.0	44.4	7.8	6.5	20.5	4.3	0.6	1.3	100.0
Muskegon	19,028	0.3	1.5	76.6	4.4	2.2	7.7	6.3	0.3	0.7	100.0
Los Angeles	758,681	1.9	7.8	15.0	20.6	2.6	2.0	20.0	13.6	16.5	100.0

Source: Lowell Juilliard Carr and James Edson Stermer, *Willow Run: A Study of Industrialization and Cultural Inadequacy*, New York: Harper, 1952, page 359. (See next page for composition of geographic sections.)

TABLE 8. Employment Increase, 1940-44

Area	1940	1944	Increase	Increase over 1940	% of all increase
Detroit-Willow Run	432,000	750,000	318,000	76.3	28.5
Los Angeles	205,000	683,000	478,000	33.1	42.8

Source: *Ibid.*, page 362.

TABLE 7 Supplement. Composition of Geographic Sections

New England	Middle Atlantic	East North Central
Maine	New York	Ohio Michigan
New Hampshire	New Jersey	Indiana Wisconsin
Vermont	Pennsylvania	Illinois
Massachusetts		
Rhode Island	South Atlantic	Mountain
Connecticut	Delaware	Montana
	Maryland	Idaho
West North Central	District of Columbia	Wyoming
Minnesota	Virginia	Colorado
Iowa	West Virginia	New Mexico
Missouri	North Carolina	Arizona
North Dakota	South Carolina	Utah
South Dakota	Georgia	Nevada
Nebraska	Florida	
Kansas		
East South Central	West South Central	Pacific
Kentucky	Arkansas	Washington
Tennessee	Louisiana	Oregon
Alabama	Oklahoma	California
Mississippi	Texas	

changes.) But many also came from mining, service trades, lumbering, construction, and so on, with previous experience on hourly rated jobs. One difference between black workers and white workers was that blacks did not gain substantial entry into defense production work until late in 1942. It is probably also true that although both black and white southerners migrated in very different proportions to different war production centers, in the case of whites the difference was more likely to be the workers' choice while in the case of blacks it was more likely to be the result of employers' hiring patterns and union attitudes.

Southern whites, some with union experience, most with none, tended, in my recollection, to be among the most militant workers in the auto industry.* A number of factors

*". . . southern workers were among the most militant, even those who were intensely racist. A southern's idea of the way to settle a quarrel is

TABLE 9. Percentage Distribution of Employed Negroes by Occupation and Sex, April 1940 and April 1944

Occupation	Negro Males			Negro Females		
	April 1940	April 1944	Changes 1940-44	April 1940	April 1944	Changes 1940-44
Farm workers	41.2	28.0	−13.2	16.0	8.1	− 7.9
Farmers, farm managers	21.3	14.3	− 7.0	3.0	2.9	− .1
Farm laborers	19.9	13.7	− 6.2	13.0	5.2	− 7.8
Industrial workers	17.0	29.7	+ 12.7	6.5	18.0	+ 11.5
Craftsmen, foremen	4.4	7.3	+ 2.9	.2	.7	+ .5
Operatives	12.6	22.4	+ 9.8	6.3	17.3	+ 11.0
Laborers	21.4	20.3	− 1.1	.8	2.0	+ 1.2
Service Workers	15.3	15.1	− .2	70.3	62.5	− 7.8
Domestic service	2.9	1.6	− 1.3	59.9	44.6	−15.3
Protective service	.5	.3	− .2	.....	.....	.....
Personal and other services	11.9	13.2	+ 1.3	10.4	17.9	+ 7.5
Clerical and sales people	2.0	3.0	+ 1.0	1.4	3.9	+ 2.5
Clerical	1.2	2.4	+ 1.2	.9	3.2	+ 2.3
Sales	.8	.6	− .2	.5	.7	+ .2
Proprietors, managers & professional workers	3.1	3.9	+ .8	5.0	5.5	+ .5
Professional, semiprofessional	1.8	1.7	− .1	4.3	4.0	− .3
Proprietors, managers, officials	1.3	2.2	+ .9	.7	1.5	+ .8
TOTAL EMPLOYED NEGROES	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	

Source: "War and Post-War Trends in Employment of Negroes," *Monthly Labor Review*, January 1945, page 2.

TABLE 10. Incidence of Negroes among Total Employed Workers in Specified Occupational Groups, April 1940 and April 1944

Occupational group	Negro males as percent of total males in occupation		Negro females as percent of total females in occupation	
	April 1940	April 1944	April 1940	April 1944
All employed persons	8.6	9.8	13.8	12.9
Professional, semiprofessional workers	2.8	3.3	4.5	5.7
Proprietors, managers, officials	1.1	2.1	2.6	4.8
Clerical workers	1.6	3.5	0.7	1.6
Sales people	1.1	1.5	1.2	1.1
Craftsmen, foremen	2.6	3.6	2.2	5.2
Operatives	5.9	10.1	4.7	8.3
Domestic service workers	60.2	75.2	46.6	60.9
Protective service workers	2.4	1.7	3.8	....
Personal and other service workers	22.8	31.4	12.7	24.0
Farmers, farm managers	12.4	11.0	30.4	23.8
Farm laborers	21.0	21.1	62.0	21.4
Laborers (excluding farm)	21.0	27.6	13.2	35.6

Source: *Ibid*, page 3.

TABLE 11. Percentage Distribution of Employed Negroes, by Industry and Sex, April 1940 and April 1944

Industry	Negro males			Negro females		
	April 1940	April 1944	Changes 1940-44	April 1940	April 1944	Changes 1940-44
Agriculture	42.0	20.9	−12.1	16.1	8.1	− 8.0
Forestry and fishing	.8	.5	− .3	....	....	....
Mining	1.8	4.2	+ 2.4	....	....	....
Construction	4.9	3.7	− 1.2	.1	....	− .1
Manufacturing	16.2	23.9	+ 7.7	3.2	13.4	+ 10.2
Metals, chemicals, rubber	5.5	13.1	+ 7.6	.2	7.3	+ 7.1
Food, clothing, textiles, leather	2.8	4.7	+ 1.9	1.8	3.9	+ 2.1
All other manufacturing	7.9	6.1	− 1.8	1.2	2.2	+ 1.0
Transportation, communication, public utilities	6.8	10.1	+ 3.3	.2	1.1	+ .9
Trade	9.9	10.9	+ 1.0	4.0	10.5	+ 6.5
Finance, insurance, real estate*	1.9	1.6	− .3	.8	1.3	+ .5
Business and repair services, including auto	1.7	1.5	− .2	.1	.1	....
Domestic and personal service	8.4	6.1	− 2.3	68.6	54.4	−14.2
Amusement, recreation	1.0	.4	− .6	.3	.4	+ .1
Professional services	2.9	3.2	+ .3	6.1	7.5	+ 1.4
Government	1.7	4.0	+ 2.3	.5	3.2	+ 2.7
All employed Negroes	100.0	100.0	....	100.0	100.0	....

Source: *Ibid*, page 4. *That is, janitors.

were at work. One element was the individualistic mythology of the south. Southern whites tended much less than any other workers to permit themselves to be pushed around. Their resistance was often individual, but individual resistance in a factory is not the same as individual resistance in other kinds of situations. It is visible to the group. It provides example or encouragement (or discouragement). It often, without this being planned by the participant, becomes the basis for a collective action, as when a worker shoves a foreman, is then disciplined, and a wildcat strike takes place to protest the discipline.

Another factor was the availability of work. Often enough a white worker could quit his job, or be fired, and be back at work at another plant the same day. (This was easier when the worker was fired. If he quit, he could have problems with federal manpower regulations which forbid workers from simply changing jobs at will.)

There was also the element, for many southern whites, of lack of union experience. As with women, while union leaders and management complained that this led to inefficiency and indiscipline,[16] it nevertheless tended toward greater militancy. This provides something of a contradiction to be examined later: the southern whites were probably the most patriotic members of the working class; yet they were probably the least subject to the discipline of war work. Generally speaking, I believe the presence of large numbers of southern white workers in the auto labor force contributed to wildcat strikes, resistance to work discipline and general militancy.

Black workers were in a very different position than white workers, northern or southern. Except for a few companies (Ford and Briggs were the largest examples), black workers were not permitted on production jobs until after the threatened March on Washington forced federal government intervention. Even after black workers entered auto production in significant numbers, there were still limits in upgrading, in the separation of production jobs by departments, and in relative exclusion from certain corporations

*(continued) to take a squirrel rifle off the wall and 'shoot it out.' When I was with Dodge local the biggest hell raisers were southerns." Frank Marquart, in letter of Nov. 29, 1975, in possession of author.

and certain plants. As a result, black workers did not have the same easy access to new jobs when old jobs were lost. A consequence of this was that black workers were less likely to initiate wildcat strikes than white workers. Wildcat strikes *were* initiated by black workers, especially when the rights of black workers were involved. A major example is a strike by black workers at Dodge to protest the refusal of the Chrysler Corporation to permit black workers to transfer to a new plant on the same basis as whites. And black workers participated in wildcat strikes that took place in the plants in which they worked. (Obviously, with the exception of strikes directed against black workers.) But the militancy of black workers tended to be expressed in other ways than that of white workers. Blacks tended more to be concerned about building up the protection of seniority and less able to use individual resistance. Blacks functioned in the UAW to build up strength, very often in hidden, informal organizations, in ways which had been perfected while living in a hostile white society in the south. Partly because of black pressure and partly because of union policy at the local level, union election slates began to ritualize the role of black members so that certain posts (usually vice-president or secretary) were consistently filled by black candidates. Many of the later higher and secondary black union leaders of the UAW came from this wartime network of experienced black union activists, a large proportion of them from Ford plants.

The presence of large numbers of black workers in the auto plants during the war may very well have acted as a brake on wildcat strikes. But it did not at all act as a brake on the development of radical ideas and opposition to the war. It was a fairly common expression of black workers that they had Hitler and Tojo to thank for their better-paying jobs in industry. Patriotism was of much less significance among black auto workers.

Included among the wartime auto workers was also an indeterminate (although relatively small) number of people who did not bring with them a working class experience. There were middle class and lower middle class men and women, small business people of various types, and a small assortment of unusual and exceptional types brought into the plants by the exigencies of the war — especially, in the

case of men, the desire to avoid the draft.

One such unusual type played a modest role in the struggle over the no-strike pledge. His name was Carl Bolton and he worked at the Ford Highland Park plant (Local 400 of the UAW). It was generally known in the plant that Bolton's pre-war occupation had something to do with the "rackets." That is, he was a small-time crook or con-man or some such character. He went to work in the plant to keep out of the army. He was very bright and very vocal. He quickly became aware of the fact that one way of getting off production was to become active in the union. At this point in the auto industry, it was easier for someone new to the industry to win union office than to get on the supervision track. Bolton succeeded, relatively quickly, in winning union office and was a member of the local executive board and a delegate to the 1944 convention of the union.

It was always intriguing to me that in the years that Bolton functioned as a member of Local 400 there was never the slightest suspicion of any illegal or shady behavior directed at him. He seemed to keep his nose entirely clean in the shop and in the union. In addition, although it is very unlikely that he had any strong or principled political or union beliefs, he was, in the union politics of the time, a left-wing militant. He consistently opposed the no-strike pledge. He frequently encouraged radical left-wing groups, especially the Trotskyists, to write his electoral programs for him. The only conceivable explanation for this was simply his shrewd judgment of the kind of program that would make him attractive to rank-and-file workers. I am sure he would have become a pro-no-strike pledge conservative unionist with equal ease if he thought the road to union office led in that direction. In a small way the experience of Carl Bolton tends to disprove the claims of both management and union officials that American workers were basically patriotic and were misled by agitators running for office. If middle level union officials seemed like militant agitators, it was, often enough, the result of opportunism rather than principle. That is, it was a response to, not a cause of, worker radicalism.[17]

Any conclusions we might draw about the effect of changes in the labor force on wildcat strikes and the no-strike pledge must be tentative. Fundamental aspects of this

question will be considered later on. Much of this depends on the meaning of such ambiguous words as "militancy" and "radicalism." Stan Weir charges that "the rank-and-file groupings that had built the CIO in each workplace had been atomized" in the years from 1940 to 1946.[18] "The coming of war did not strike dumb the people who built the new unionism of the '30's, but it did remove them from the work places and the social combinations inside the shops that were the basis of the organizing drives. Also, it geometrically accelerated the bureaucratization of their unions. They thereby lost a major facility through which they could assimilate their experience with change and in which they had previously been able to bank growing class consciousness."[19] There is no evidence whatever for the "atomization" of the workers who had helped organize the UAW. Some went into the armed forces. Some went into the bureaucracy and helped consolidate it. Too many of the names that appeared during the organizing days, however, reappeared in the wartime wildcats for Weir's thesis to be acceptable.

But more important than the role of the early militants is the estimate of the role of the union. With the rapid bureaucratization of the union during the war years, the relative freedom of the newer workers from the traditions of the union left them free to work out their own forms of militancy and radicalism. But, generally speaking, the difference between the newer and older workers was not that great. Ford had been organized in the spring of 1941, some eight months or so before Pearl Harbor. General Motors had been organized in 1937. What had preceded the wartime period was a mere four years of continuing organizing activity. What happened during the war years, as we shall see, was the rapid bureaucratization of the top, while local union officers, generally speaking, retained close ties to the rank and file. When some of the early militants were railroaded into the army because they were active in the struggle against the no-strike pledge, they retained the support of their fellow union members, no matter how new or old these were.*

*Emil Mazey of Briggs and Marlon Butler of Buick are two of the better known examples. "So much did his fellow workers support Emil that they elected him to become East Side Regional Director when he was still in the army on a Pacific base. Only later did Emil learn he had been elected." Letter from Frank Marquart, Nov. 29, 1975, in possession of author.

3

WILDCAT STRIKES

During the first months of American participation in the war there were relatively few strikes. This seems not to have been solely a response to the war and the no-strike pledge. The number of strikes had dropped considerably before Pearl Harbor. 1941 had been a peak year of strikes (see Table 12). But most of the strikes had been concentrated in the first six months of the year. There were major strikes at Allis Chalmers in January and International Harvester in February. On March 19 Roosevelt created the National Defense Mediation Board with considerable powers to attempt to restrain the interference of workers with defense production. In April, however, came the successful strike to organize Ford. In June the federal government intervened directly (with the collaboration of the UAW leaders) to break a strike at North American Aviation in California with the use of military force. (This was the last major strike before the German invasion of Russia and the last one in which local leaders sympathetic to Communist Party policies were involved.)

Strikes declined during the rest of the year. A major exception, however, was the strike of coal miners in the captive mines owned by the steel companies to win the union shop. The National Defense Mediation Board refused to grant the union shop, with the public, industry and AFL[1] representatives voting against the miners. The two CIO representatives voted against the decision. John L. Lewis was able to force them to resign from the board, although CIO leaders had attacked the miners for daring to strike despite the needs of national defense. The CIO representatives were Thomas Kennedy, an official of the UMW directly responsible to Lewis, and Philip Murray, head of the Steelworkers but a former

TABLE 12. Strikes and Lockouts in the United States

Year	No. of strikes	No. of workers involved	No. of man-days idle	Percent of total employed
1916	3,789	1,559,917	....	8.4
1917	4,450	1,227,254	....	6.3
1918	3,353	1,239,989	....	6.2
1919	3,630	4,160,348	....	20.8
1920	3,411	1,463,054	....	7.2
1921	2,385	1,099,247	....	6.4
1922	1,112	1,612,562	....	8.7
1923	1,553	756,584	....	3.5
1924	1,249	654,641	....	3.1
1925	1,301	428,416	....	2.0
1926	1,035	329,592	....	1.5
1927	707	329,939	26,218,628	1.4
1928	604	314,210	12,631,863	1.3
1929	921	288,572	5,351,540	1.2
1930	637	182,975	3,316,808	.8
1931	810	341,817	6,893,244	1.6
1932	841	324,210	10,502,033	1.8
1933	1,695	1,168,272	16,872,128	6.3
1934	1,856	1,466,695	19,591,949	7.2
1935	2,014	1,117,213	15,456,337	5.2
1936	2,172	788,648	13,901,956	3.1
1937	4,740	1,860,621	28,424,857	7.2
1938	2,772	688,376	9,148,273	2.8
1939	2,613	1,170,962	17,812,219	4.7
1940	2,508	576,988	6,700,872	2.3
1941	4,288	2,362,620	23,047,556	8.4
1942	2,968	839,961	4,182,557	2.8
1943	3,752	1,981,279	13,500,529	6.9
1944	4,956	2,115,637	8,721,079	7.0
1945	4,750	3,467,000	38,025,000	12.2
1945 (1st 9 mos.)	3,770	2,215,000	13,080,000	....

Source: "Work Stoppages Caused by Labor-Management Disputes in 1945," *Monthly Labor Review*, May 1946, page 720.

UMW official. The consequence of the resignations was the demise of the National Defense Mediation Board. The UMW won its demand through the appointment of a special board to mediate this particular dispute on which the public member was known in advance to be sympathetic to the miners' demand.

When the United States entered the war, strikes were at a low ebb. American workers had been witness, during the preceding year, to two conflicting roads. One was the ability of the American government to break strikes through the use of military force. The other was the ability of workers to stand up to the government and win over the concerted pressure of government, management, press, and labor leaders.* Some strikes were called off as a result of the outbreak of war, others were not (see chapter 1) but gradually, the number of strikes began to mount.

What was the nature of the increasing number of strikes? They only had two things in common. They were all wildcats, that is, illegal under union rules. None of them involved traditional contract negotiations. Other than these factors, wartime strikes covered a tremendous range of circumstances. But much of the evidence is contradictory.

Some union leaders blamed management provocation or radical agitation.[2] Some management spokesmen blamed union agitators. For example, George Romney, speaking for the auto industry, charged that, "The manpower problem exists principally because the desire of a majority of workers to do more work and get this war over with is being thwarted by an unrestrained militant minority group of workers, stewards and union representatives."[3] It would be useful to indicate in some detail the specific causes or circumstances of certain strikes and the situation of particular plants or areas.

Tool and die shops seem to have been relatively free of wildcat strikes.[4] In western Michigan, Grand Rapids had fewer strikes, proportionately, than Muskegon. Leonard Woodcock, who was an international representative in this area (Region 1D) during World War II, attributes this, in part,

*Perhaps the difference was not the use of military force by the government but the collaboration of union leaders which made the introduction of troops easier to accomplish.

to the relative conservatism of an area dominated by the Dutch Reformed Church. Muskegon, which had a much smaller influx of southerners, black and white, than Detroit (see Table 7), nevertheless was a center of wildcat strikes. "As a matter of fact, Cannon Foundries — there were four plants in Muskegon all close together — used to vie with the American Can and Foundry in Birwood, Pennsylvania, for the championship of who had the most wildcat strikes during the war years. We did not have that sentiment to the extent that it existed around some other places, such as Chicago, Detroit and so on. . . . I think most of [the strikes] were tied to the incentive systems. . . . There was constant bargaining about rates. This frequently led to hassles and stoppages and as these stoppages began to be productive of results, they became contagious."[5] Testifying before a Senate committee, Richard T. Frankensteen claimed: "I can say to you that to my knowledge there has not been a single strike since the war."[6] Frankensteen's claim is absolute nonsense and I would have to assume that Frankensteen knew it was nonsense when he made it. Woodcock's perception is closer to reality. That is to say, the fact that at least some strikes could be won was in itself an additional cause of strikes.

Woodcock indicates another cause of strikes which also showed the strike-breaking role of the union leadership. "Weak managements would make this problem worse. I remember at the Continental plant we had a lot of stoppages, and I used to spend a great deal of my time going down there and putting men back to work. But finally one day (this must have been around '43, I guess) the plant was down and I was sitting in with the committee and the management. Jack Reese was then president of Continental, as he still is, and he finally said to me, 'Well, what would you do about it?' I said, 'Well, I am not going to answer that question, but I will tell you this. If I were in your place, I would say to this union, "This plant stays down until this union comes to its senses."' He looked at me and then he said, 'All right, this plant is down.' So we had a membership meeting, and we just said that this sort of thing was intolerable and it is undemocratic and improper. We got a motion passed overwhelmingly that anybody who did this sort of thing was on his own. We did not have another wildcat strike in that place

for at least 18 months."[7]

While it is obvious that Woodcock played a role in breaking strikes and contributed to a lessening of wildcats at Continental Motors, it would be dangerous to generalize from this experience of a so-called weak management. In Detroit, two of the plants that experienced well over the average number of wildcats were the Mack Ave. Briggs plant, characterized by one of the toughest and most hardnosed managements in the industry, and the Packard plant, where the management might conceivably be described as "weak." The role of the management stemmed from factors that they could not control. Packard, for example, with much less flexibility than General Motors, often had to give in to workers' pressure.

Disputes over piecework involved two elements. One was wages, the other was production standards. After wages were pretty generally frozen, workers in piecework plants might still be able to manipulate their income by challenging piecework rates. Some plants managed to beat the freeze. Michigan Steel Tube Products (Local 238) in Hamtramck, Michigan, was one such place.

> Then there came a time when we saw our possibility of getting to the area wage level evaporating. We were in a war, this was after Pearl Harbor, and we saw a wage freeze coming and we decided that it was then or never. So what happened was that we demanded a 10-cent wage increase quick. We were not waiting for long negotiations because we never knew when there would be a wage freeze. A strike developed, of course. And we had a long strike. This was the strike that made the editorial pages of the Detroit newspapers. We were allies of Hirohito and next to Pearl Harbor, we were responsible for the rest of the troubles of the country, you know. . . .[8]

They won a 10-cent increase and a carefully controlled group incentive pay plan. In other plants less direct methods were employed to improve wage and income levels. Edward Purdy recalled the form this problem took at Fruehauf Trailer Co.

> In 1942 the local negotiated a wage increase with

> management. This is about the time as I recall that the War Manpower Board really got going. In fact, in 1944 I finally wound up before the Board answering the final questions. It took that long to get that wage increase. . . . The only thing we could get, for example, was a pit put into the paint shop so that the guys spraying the chassis did not have to lie down on the floor. . . . In that period we got coveralls paid for by the company. We got gloves for the welders. You name it, this was the sort of thing we were able to get for the workers during this period. This would have been considered any kind of economic gain in that they did not have to buy gloves that would have cost them $1.50 a pair. They did not have to rent coveralls three times a week in order to be able to move. The company furnished them all of these things which were things they would have had to furnish before. But beyond this there was not anything that we could do other than process grievances. We could not make any kind of economic gain.[9]

In addition to the time it took to process a pay raise through government boards (when it wasn't rejected out of hand), there were the delays in paying awards after they were granted. Sam Sage, an official of the Wayne County CIO Council out of a Briggs local, said that, "it was a matter of not getting paid their retroactive pay as fast as they thought they should. . . ."[10]

> The result was that you would get your raise approved as of today and it might be six weeks before you got the back pay in your pay envelope. About four weeks went by and a series of wildcat strikes would break out. The boys would say, "Well, to hell with it. We have not got our back pay." In fact, that was one of the things that cost me my presidency at my local union. . . . We were one of the first ones at Briggs local. But then other locals all over town got caught in the same wringer.[11]

On the other hand, in a contradiction that is more apparent than real, relatively high income also contributed to the frequency of wildcat strikes. Jess Ferrazza, also from a Briggs local but, unlike Sage, a militant opposed to the no-strike pledge, put it this way:

> Another thing that led to a lot of the work stoppages was the fact that workers were drawing fairly good salaries. There were not too many things that it could be spent on because of the curtailment of amusements during the war. They could not travel too much. The result was that most plant workers had a little bit of money. A lot of them came from the farms and the hinterlands where they were not used to making the kind of money they did in the city. The result was that some days they were not too anxious to work. But this is something that you could expect. A lot of humorous incidents arose in connection with some of these work stoppages. I remember in one of the plants during the summer on a hot day, the fellows decided that they were going to stop working and go home because it was too hot to work. But they could not leave the plant for 45 minutes because it was raining so hard outside. We still remind some of these fellows who instigated this walkout about this.[12]

Striking to get more money and striking because there was a surplus of money is not as contradictory as it may seem. Workers were aware that they were bearing an unfair share of the cost of the war. There was a wage freeze that was pretty rigid, limitation of overtime pay, controls over movement to better jobs, considerably higher payroll taxes, and so on. At the same time workers were aware of skyrocketing wartime profits, no limits on executive salaries, inflationary price spirals and the like. Nevertheless, the financial status of the average worker was better than before the war. There was considerable forced overtime. Many workers had upgraded from lower-paying jobs in service and other trades, or in agriculture, to the relatively high union wages in defense industry. Substantial numbers of wartime workers had come off extended periods of unemployment and were experiencing relative security for the first time in their lives. And a higher proportion of working class families had more than one wage earner.

What is involved in struggles for improved income is not impoverishment but a combination of two factors. One factor was the awareness of discriminatory treatment of workers. Workers could see both the tremendous profits and the tremendous waste all around them and they could not see

why they had to accept limits that were not applied to any other section of the population. The other factor was power. This was the first time since the beginning of the Great Depression that there was anything like a shortage of labor. That is to say, this was the first time in anyone's memory that workers had the means to exert considerable pressure for improved wages. That, in fact, is why the government rushed to freeze wages at a ridiculously low level. The result was that workers imposed many back door deals on management, circumventing the wage freeze by changing job descriptions, promotions, supply of tools, work clothes, etc. which had previously been purchased by the worker, and so on. Struggles over wages also spilled over into other areas. This was especially true in shops where piecework prevailed. But it was also true in other situations where a grievance that might be monetary at the start might become transformed, consciously or unconsciously, when the road to monetary improvement was blocked. The reverse was also true. Grievances over production, safety, supervisory practices, etc. could be transformed into monetary terms if there seemed no other way to deal with the question.

The bulk of the situations that led to wildcat strikes, however, did not relate to questions of money. They involved, as they do to this day, the whole range of conditions at work including production standards, hours of work, health and safety, free time, promotions and transfers, grievance procedure, etc., all of which the spokesmen for management correctly, if stridently, denounced as interference with the functions of management.

The category of working conditions, however, like the category of pay, gives rise to contradictory testimony about the reality of life in the shops during World War II.

Jess Ferrazza, describing the situation at Briggs, where he was local union president, said,

> Management would not settle grievances. They would tell us to take them to the War Labor Board. The War Labor Board, although they tried to do a job, was not properly staffed to handle the job that had to be done. The result was that grievances took a year or a year and a half to be processed. Many of the workers thought that this was the long course around. They after awhile became impatient

when their grievances remained unsettled. The result was that during the war we had many unauthorized work stoppages.

I can remember when I was president of Local 212 during the war. I used to think I had accomplished something if one of the plants had not gone on a strike because this thing kept popping up all over. If it was not the one plant, it was in the other plant. It was like a fireman with a water bucket running around trying to put fires out. The management, of course, never co-operated in these stoppages. If the grievance was a justifiable one, they would not settle it anyhow. They would tell you to get the workers back to work. Under the grievance procedure, of course, this was the thing that had to be done. But the War Labor Board at that time was sort of a box canyon. It would lead you into the canyon but there was no way out of it because you could not get your grievance settled. The result of these was that our local union, Local 212 took the initiative in fighting the no-strike pledge.[13]

In passing it should be noted that Ferrazza, one of the militants fighting against the no-strike pledge, found himself trying to prevent or terminate wildcats. He did not go around organizing strikes — although that may very well have happened on occasion. In this, his experience is borne out by other militants. F. D. "Jack" Palmer, of the Flint Chevrolet local, a leading anti-no-strike pledge militant, indicates he exerted a restraining influence in the shop. "When I was committeeman during the war, I could have shut that plant down hundreds of times but I would have been fired if I had."[14] When asked what got the people worked up, he responded:

It was mostly over absenteeism and any little violation of any shop rules. They thought they were disciplining the workers at that time and they thought they had a chance to do it on account of the war. We have the umpire system in General Motors and you have to build a record against the man before you can take it to the umpire and actually discharge him. So they tried to build a record against everybody they could build a record against. . . . And they thought that was an opportune time to do it. . . .

I said we would go in and bargain on a grievance for a person being sent home for smoking. They sat there and

smoked and they would not let us smoke in the same office.[15]

This was confirmed by Norm Bully of GM's Buick plant in Flint.

> . . . the company took advantage of this situation. The fact that we had pledged that we would not strike meant that when we went in to negotiate for something, a mere "no" was enough. There was nothing much that we could do about it. We had government agencies, of course, and long drawn-out procedures to seek relief but they were so time consuming and so detailed and very very difficult. . . . [Striking] was a desperation move actually. When we found that there was no other solution except a wildcat strike, we found ourselves striking not only against the corporation but against practically the government, at least public opinion, and our own union and its pledge.
>
> Skeels (interviewer): But you did not have any trouble getting the people out at the time?
>
> Bully: No. In fact, our problem was to keep them at work. You see, most of the people that worked in these plants realized the situation too and felt just as I have described to you. The corporations were showing no sense of patriotism or loyalty and were contributing nothing. All the sacrifices were on the part of the workers. When real and pressing grievances arose and there was no solution and management hid behind the no-strike pledge, the people felt that they were justified. They were justified in forcing a settlement.[16]

At the same time, Bully noted that, "All discipline was relaxed. It proved to me that when you removed the profit motive [he was referring to cost-plus contracts], things change."[17]

Once again there is the seeming contradiction between conditions that are simultaneously better and worse. This can only be understood in terms of sharpening conflict. On the one hand, workers, not yet out of the period of intense class conflict of the organizing days of the CIO, were taking advantage of the labor shortage and the requirements of the war to impose improvements in working conditions and in workers' control of the workplace. On the other hand,

corporations, sustained by the guaranteed profits of war contracts, both made concessions to the workers while attempting to discipline militants and, with an eye to post-war necessities, not letting workers get too far out of hand. Although the relations between management, workers, and union varied considerably from plant to plant, in general I think the weight of evidence is that it was the workers who were on the offensive and the corporations who were on the defensive.

One of the key figures in trying to control strikes in the Detroit area was the infamous Col. George E. Strong, Air Corps, Commanding Officer, Central District, Air Technical Service Command. He was responsible for much military procurement and spent much of his time trying to break strikes, fire militants and the like. In testimony before a Senate Committee, he put forward a general criticism of the labor force.

> In these plants are many people who haven't worked in industry, who aren't used to discipline, who aren't subject to control by either management or by the union, who care nothing about unionism and resent management and they also, I think, resent all the wartime controls and, from time to time, something that O. P. A. does or the difficulty of transportation makes them want to take it out on somebody and management is the natural whipping boy for them to take it out on.[18]

It is noteworthy that, unlike some labor historians, Strong equates absence of a union tradition with militancy. Much of the testimony at these hearings revolved around the problems at the Packard Motor Car Co., another auto plant with a very high level of wildcat strikes. Some of the incidents discussed are quite revealing.

M. F. Macauley, Manufacturing Control Manager at Packard, testified about the difficulty in improving efficiency on an aircraft engine.

> Mr. Macauley. . . . We weren't allowed in there for 2 years to time-study the job.
>
> Sen. Ferguson. Wait a minute. You say you weren't allowed in?

Mr. Macauley. No, sir.

Sen. Ferguson. Who kept you out?

Mr. Macauley. The stewards of the plant objected every time we went in to study them. . . . [A] number of times they told the time-study man to get out of the department. So as to avoid trouble, he got out.

Sen. Ferguson. Well, now, I am just unable to . . . understand it, if a steward tells an employee of the company to get out of the factory, that he gets out. I am not able to understand it. Will you explain it?

Mr. Macauley. You would either have that or trouble or a walkout on you or bodily throw him out. . . .

Sen. Ferguson. So, one of two things happens: That if the steward tells an employee of the company to get out of the factory, and he doesn't go out voluntarily, they will do one of two things — walk out themselves or throw him out bodily.

Mr. Macauley. That is correct.

Sen. Ferguson. Well, have you ever had anybody thrown out? . . .

Mr. Macauley. No; I haven't on time study because they just got out before they got into trouble.

Sen. Ferguson. Have you ever had anybody thrown out by the stewards on any other study of any other work?

Mr. Macauley. Well, I think Mr. Patzkowsky can tell you some foremen who were walked out of the plant.

Sen. Ferguson. You mean the stewards took the foreman out of the plant?

Mr. Macauley. That is correct.[19]

Richard Bone, a Packard foreman, testified about the only time he could recall having a wildcat in his department:

Mr. Bone. It so happened that there was a misunderstanding on another floor, and the men were wrong. The plant committee was negotiating the grievance. These men came down and walked through my department and the men stopped. I said, "Fellows, you are all out of order. You had better get out of here." And they walked out. The steward and I called the men together and told them the facts. I addressed them and said, "All right, Clyde, you go ahead and tell them the facts, so they can think everything is in order."

Sen. Ferguson. Do I understand this is true: It is so

sensitive that, if some men from another department walk together down through your department, indicating that they have stopped in that department, your department stops right there?

Mr. Bone. No, it doesn't stop; but it is bad; has a bad effect on them.

Sen. Ferguson. But you said in that particular case it did stop. Is that right? . . .

Mr. Bone. That is right.

Sen. Ferguson. Did I understand you right, it was just because the men walked through there that caused the strike?

Mr. Bone. Well, they stopped a while.[20]

The foreman was obviously uneasy about admitting that there had been a wildcat. Another military man, testifying about conditions at Packard, had no such problems.

Sen. Ferguson. Have they had any strikes at Packard during the year and one-half that you were there?

Col. Anthony. A great many.

Sen. Ferguson. Notwithstanding what has been going on [that is, refusal to permit time study, "loafing," etc.], they have still had strikes?

Col. Anthony. Yes, sir.

Sen. Ferguson. How many?

Col. Anthony. During 1944, my file shows approximately 75 strikes.

Sen. Ferguson. What do you call a strike?

Col. Anthony. Any time when workers, on their own volition, stop work. [The implication of this exchange and the next few omitted lines is that many strikes went unreported in the press and in government statistics.] . . .

Sen. Ferguson. Have they had any since the first of the year 1945? [The hearing was in early March.] . . .

Col. Anthony. I would say approximately eight.

Acting Chairman. What caused those eight strikes?

Col. Anthony. Senator, there are a great many causes for these strikes. Some are based on rate questions, rate of pay. I would say that the larger number of them are based upon disciplinary action by the management. . . .

Well, we have had — you see there are so many different reasons — bad strikes in September and October over the rates of the maintenance workers in the company.

We had strikes in November on the question of racial discrimination in the polishing department. It got into racial questions. Those were serious. We had a very serious strike in May that came up over the organization of a foreman's association.

Now, those are the strikes which have caused the greatest loss in man-hours. The strikes that have resulted from disciplinary action have been a great deal more in number but of much shorter duration and inclined to be localized in a certain department rather than something in general.

Acting Chairman. Who won, generally, in the disciplinary strikes? Would you say either side won in a majority of the cases in the disciplinary strikes?

Col. Anthony. I would say that in the disciplinary strikes the company has been the loser.

Sen. Ferguson. What do you class as such a strike? Give us an example.

Col. Anthony. Where workers are docked because they quit early.

Sen. Ferguson. What do you call "quit early"?

Col. Anthony. Well, lining up in the clock alleys ahead of the proper time.

Sen. Ferguson. What would you say about congregating in the stairways?

Col. Anthony. That would definitely be a matter subject to docking, and people have been docked in large quantities for that action at Packard.

Sen. Ferguson. What would you say of last Friday, of some 50 or more women workers being in the stairway before quitting time?

Col. Anthony. Well, that is the type of case where there could be a disciplinary action, which the workers could resist by stopping the next day, when it was found that they had been docked for that stoppage.

Sen. Ferguson. Do I understand if the company docks them for that kind of an act, that there is a stoppage the next day?

Col. Anthony. In many cases there have been stoppages.

Sen. Ferguson. And how long would the stoppage last?

Col. Anthony. It might last anywhere from 15 minutes to a half day or three-quarters of a day.

Sen. Ferguson. Then what happens? Do they give them the time?

Col. Anthony. In certain cases the company has reversed its decision. In other cases the company had not reversed its decision.

Sen. Ferguson. How do they get the strike settled if they don't reverse?

Col. Anthony. Well, in that case you might say the workers decide that they have made their protest, and they are not going to carry it any further, so they come back.[21]

In completing his testimony, Col. Anthony put government strike statistics in considerable doubt.

Col. Anthony. Well, from the standpoint of the newspapers, I would say, certainly, that only a very small proportion of the strikes appear in the newspapers.

Sen. Ferguson. In other words, the fact that we get an official list from the State of Michigan or the Federal Government, that doesn't give us any true picture of the number of strikes in the war plants here in Detroit.

Col. Anthony. Judging from the figures you have given me, I would have to agree with that conclusion.

Sen. Ferguson. Well, do you know that to be a fact? You say they don't appear in the newspapers.

Col. Anthony. All I can state, Senator, is about the condition at Packard, and there I know that my records show a certain number of strikes, and I know that only a very small proportion of those have appeared in the newspapers. So, I can only speak on that case.

Sen. Ferguson. That is what I mean. That is a fact as far as the Packard plant.

Col. Anthony. So far as Packard is concerned, that is a fact.[22]

It should be noted that military officers in uniform were present in all of the war production plants during the war and they regularly intervened in strikes and potential strikes.[23] In other words, the reality of the war and the role of the government were concretely present to workers who went on strike or who threatened to go on strike.

George Romney, on behalf of the Automotive Council (the wartime name of the Automobile Manufacturers Association) presented a lengthy statement to this Senate Committee which was basically intended to brand the union as

responsible for all strikes and inefficiency in the war industries. Despite the inflated rhetoric, the statement contains interesting lists of strikes and the circumstances leading to strikes. (See next pages.)

This is not a complete accounting of walkouts in the auto industry. Assuming the distortions inevitable in a management document designed to make the union look bad, the accumulation of walkouts, large and small, in a wide variety of plants, provides an indication of the tensions and guerrilla warfare characteristic of the auto industry.

Although money was a factor, combined with the continual irritations of commodity shortages, housing shortages, and excessive overtime, the most common concern seems to have been the numerous kinds of grievances around production and discipline that challenged management's right to run their plants. Despite the opposition of the top union leadership and, often enough, local union leaders; despite the pressure of the government through uniformed officers present in the plants; despite the pressure of the draft boards to get rid of militants[24]; despite the loss of militants, including stewards and committeemen, through company dismissals; despite the fantastic pressure of the daily papers which bitterly and viciously attacked striking workers; wildcats continued to increase in number as the war went on.

In the middle of 1944, successes in the war in Europe led to the first layoffs. This raised the specter of post-war unemployment in addition to all the war-time problems. The effect was probably two-fold. It reduced the effectiveness of patriotic propaganda. It was difficult to justify maximum production from workers whose fellow workers were being laid off. At the same time, it ended the labor shortage which had given workers such a powerful weapon during the war years.

There does not seem to have been any consistent relationship between the militancy of the local union leadership and the incidence of wildcat strikes. Briggs Local 212 had both an extremely militant leadership and a considerable number of strikes. Chevrolet Local 659, on the other hand, had a militant, anti-no-strike pledge leadership, and relatively few wildcat strikes. One possible element in the situation is that conscious radicals were often a restraining influence

Taken from: Reported Work Stoppages in Automobile Plants in Dec. 1944, Jan., Feb. 1945[25]

Company	Plant	Start. date	Dispute
Briggs	Mack (Det.)	12/1/44	Protesting company policy concerning seniority of demoted foreman.
Ford	Rouge	12/1/44	Protest against demoted foreman replacing a No. 1 roller, despite this being his former classification.
General Motors	Fisher Body	12/1/44	Sand-blast employees demanded 10 minutes to clean up at end of shift; walked out when not granted.
Ford	Rouge	12/2/44	Committeeman forbade bricklayers and helpers to hook stock pans, as had been the custom, claiming it was outside their classification.
Mack	Allentown	12/2/44	When a number of employees did not show up for work, the remainder decided to go home also.
Briggs	Milwaukee Ave. (Det.)	12/2/44	Protest of warning notice given to employees.
Perfect Circle	New Castle	12/4/44	Result of misunderstanding in inspect-grind dept. concerning the grinding of certain rings.
Briggs	Mack (Det.)	12/5/44	Protest discharge of two employees.
Ford	Rouge	12/5/44	Protest against possibility of disciplinary action against first helper who permitted furnace roof to burn.
Hudson	Main	12/5/44	Protesting padlocking of entrance to toolroom to keep unauthorized persons from entering this area in order to eliminate theft of tools.
Chrysler	Dodge, truck	12/5/44	7 employees stopped work in protest of discharge of employee for refusing to perform his operation; 5 of this 7 were discharged when they refused to return to work; 320 employees then stopped work and left plant.

Company	Plant	Start. date	Dispute
L. A. Young	Plant 3 (Det.)	12/5/44	Protest against chairman of plant committee having been sent home for refusing to do as instructed.
Ford	Rouge	12/5/44	Protest against suspension of 2 committeemen for countermanding orders of supervision and reading newspapers on the job.
Ford	Rouge	12/6/44	Employees protested removal of stools.
Intl. Harvester	Fort Wayne	12/6/44	Demand for special piecework allowance.
Mack	Allentown	12/6/44	Protesting the transfer of 1 employee.
Chrysler	Dodge (Chi.)	12/6/44	Employees stopped work in protest when a conveyor loader was removed from an operation which could be handled by only one man
Chrysler	Dodge (Chi.)	12/6/44	Recurrence of above stoppage.
Briggs	Outer Drive (Det.)	12/6/44	Protest stepdown of employee, claiming that he should be transferred to another department instead.
General Motors	Chevrolet (St. Louis)	12/7/44	Employee sent home for refusing to do job assigned to him; 37 other employees refused to go to work unless employee was permitted to return.
Hudson	Main	12/7/44	Protesting dockage of 15 minutes for reporting late from lunch.
Chrysler	Dodge (Chi.)	12/8/44	Protesting 3-day disciplinary layoff of an employee for refusing to perform his operation.
Ford	Highland Park	12/8/44	Protest against dockage for leaving job. Also, demand for removal of foreman.
American Brake-Shoe	Detroit	12/8/44	Small group in press department demanded discharge of 1 man disliked by the group; no grievance was filed; company refused to dismiss and workers walked out.
Chrysler	Dodge (Chi.)	12/9/44	Employees stopped work and left plant when 1 employee was denied pass to go home after he had refused to go to first aid in order that

Company	Plant	Start. date	Dispute
			they might determine the extent of his alleged illness.
Briggs	Garage (Det.)	12/11/44	Questioning company application of seniority provisions.
Briggs	Mack (Det.)	12/11/44	Crane operators refused to work more than 8 hours.
Ford	Rouge	12/14/44	2 men were reprimanded for smoking; fellow-employees accompanied them to labor-relations office in sympathy.
General Motors	Chevrolet (St. Louis)	12/14/44	Material unloading men refused to work until 4 men suspended for refusing to do their jobs were put back to work.
General Motors	Cadillac (Det.)	12/14/44	Mass smoking demonstration protesting shop-smoking regulations.
Chrysler	Dodge (Chi.)	12/15/44	Stopped work claiming that band-saw blades were not sharp.
Chrysler	Dodge (Chi.)	12/15/44	Stopped work in protest when notified that they would not be paid for time not worked during above stoppage.
Chrysler	Dodge (Main)	12/15/44	51 employees in transportation dept. refused to begin work in protest against disciplinary layoff given 1 driver who had been drinking during working hours.
Chrysler	Dodge (Main)	12/15/44	Protesting discharge of employee for threatening foreman with bodily harm after being informed that he would not be paid for time he did not work before end of shift.
Chrysler	Dodge (Main)	12/15/44	Employees left plant in protest of discharge of asst. chief steward for countermanding orders of supervision.
Ford	Willow Run	12/15/44	Employees demanded 5 cent increase in rate claiming they were performing duties of a higher classification.
Chrysler	Kercheval (Det.)	12/19/44	Employees stopped work because females having more seniority than men on the same classification were laid off because of inability to perform heavy work.
Briggs	Conner (Det.)	12/20/44	Protest discharge of 3 employees.

Company	Plant	Start. date	Dispute
Briggs	Outer Drive (Det.)	12/20/44	Protest company refusing to allow employee of another plant into this plant without credentials.
General Motors	Hyatt Bearings (Rahway, N.J.)	12/20/44	Employee transferred to automatic dept. from external grinding. Employees in auto. dept. requested transferred employee be given lower rated job and lower classified employee in auto. dept. be promoted; answer promised by next day; however, entire day shift did not report.
Briggs	Mack (Det.)	12/20/44	Claim job required more men.
Chrysler	Dodge (Chi.)	12/21/44	Protesting removal of chairs and stools from production machines.
Chrysler	Dodge (Chi.)	12/21/44	Same (but involving 200 more employees).
Chrysler	Dodge (Chi.)	12/21/44	Sympathy with stoppage caused by removal of chairs.
Chrysler	Dodge (Chi.)	12/22/44	Protesting removal of chairs and stools from production machines.
Ford	Rouge	12/23/44	Outside dock workers refused to work indoors as necessitated by excessive absenteeism.
Chrysler	Jefferson (Det.)	12/23/44	Employees stopped work for 45 minutes because of discharge of employee for spoiling work.
Ford	Rouge	12/26/44	Key employees failed to report to work, causing job to shut down. [Unclear whether strike or absenteeism.]
Packard	Main	12/26/44	Chief steward claimed supervision would not recognize district steward.
Ford	Willow Run	12/26/44	Protest against suspension of committeeman for being off job without pass.
Chrysler	Dodge (Chi.)	12/27/44	Left plant because of 3-day lay-off given 2 employees for refusing to assist in setting trimmer dies.
Packard	Main	12/28/44	Objected to being paid on Saturday instead of Friday.

Company	Plant	Start. date	Dispute
Chrysler	McKinstry (Det.)	12/28/44	Left plant because they did not wish to perform some emergency work.
Ford	Highland Park	12/29/44	Employees accompanied fellow-worker sent to labor relations for smoking.
Packard	Main	12/30/44	Protest against employees being docked for leaving plant early.
Ford	Lincoln (Det.)	12/30/44	Protest against temporary transfers to another job and suspension of worker for striking foreman.
Eaton	Massilon, O.	12/31/44	Rolling mill operator refused job assignment and was suspended. 9 of his fellow workers walked out in sympathy.
Chrysler	Dodge (Chi.)	1/1/45	Employees struck and left plant at midnight 2 hours before end of shift, because they were only to receive straight time for hours after midnight following a holiday.
Muskegon Mot. Sp.	Jackson Crank-shaft	1/2/45	Attended union meeting not authorized by management.
Murray Corp.	Ecorse, Mich.	1/2/45	Would not work outside because of cold.
Ford	Rouge	1/4/45	Core makers stopped work to protest against disciplinary suspension of employee for slowing down production.
Chrysler	Dodge (Main)	1/4/45	Left plant because of disciplinary action on probationary employee who refused to perform duties to which assigned.
Ford	Rouge	1/5/45	Switchmen protested the sending of 2 men to the labor relations office for leaving job before quitting time.
Chrysler	DeSoto (Main)	1/5/45	Employees on 2nd shift in dept. left plant because they alleged 1st shift was putting in more overtime work.
Chrysler	Dodge (Main)	1/6/45	6 inspectors refused to resume work after lunch claiming there was a draft and no heat on.

Company	Plant	Start. date	Dispute
General Motors	Chevy, Grey Iron (Saginaw)	1/6/45	Protest by employees of the scheduled working hours; disliked late quitting time (6:06 p.m.)
Intl. Harvester	Indianapolis	1/8/45	Demand that foundry job rate be increased or placed on incentive basis.
Packard	Main	1/8/45	Refused to test two engines on test stand.
Briggs	Vernor (Det.)	1/8/45	Protesting of wage rates.
Chrysler	Dodge (Chi.)	1/8/45	60 employees stopped work when general foreman brought employee discharged for striking foreman to tool crib to clear tools.
Briggs	Milw. (Det.)	1/9/45	Protesting layoff.
Briggs	Milw. (Det.)	1/9/45	Protest discipline for refusing to take orders from foreman.
Briggs	Mack (Det.)	1/9/45	Dispute over classification of 1 employee.
Briggs	Mack (Det.)	1/9/45	In sympathy with above strike.
Ford	Willow Run	1/10/45	Protest for dockage for changing into work clothes on company time.
Packard	Main	1/11/45	Inspector taken off job by steward; mechanics left job.
Ford	Willow Run	1/11/45	Workers demanded that storm sheds be built on receiving dock to prevent drafts when trucks enter or leave.
General Motors	Buick (Flint)	1/11/45	Protest because locker rooms were locked during working hours to prevent loafing.
Ford	Willow Run	1/12/45	Protest against disciplinary penalty imposed on a fellow employee for deliberately slowing down his production.
Ferro Mac. & Foundry	Cleveland	1/13/45	Protesting refusal to pay for time not worked.
Chrysler	Dodge Truck	1/15/45	14 employees stopped work because they claimed there was not enough manpower on their jobs. 268 others affected.
Ford	Willow Run	1/15/45	Inspectors protested removal of desks.

Company	Plant	Start. date	Dispute
Packard	Main	1/15/45	3 colored employees refused to do work assigned.*
Packard	Main	1/15/45	Demand change in classification.
Chrysler	Dodge (Chi.)	1/15/45	95 employees left plant because they did not want to work the scheduled 12-hour shift.
General Motors	Frigid. (Dayton)	1/16/45	1 of 6 female employees involved stated they had stopped working in protest of the transfer of a Negro employee into their dept. group.
General Motors	Det. Diesel	1/16/45	Protest suspension of job setter in screw machine dept. who refused to do job assignment.
General Motors	Fisher Body Aircraft	1/18/45	In sympathy with one of their group who was in office for disciplinary action.
General Motors	Same	1/20/45	Spotwelder penalized for refusing to move stock to his machine so he could continue working. 5 others then quit.
Chrysler	Dodge (Chi.)	1/20/45	Employees in materials handling dept. stopped work in protest of a 3-day layoff given an electric truck driver for failure to report an accident and leaving scene of accident without giving aid to injured
Chrysler	Dodge (Chi.)	1/22/45	Same employees refused to work for 2 hrs. when above employees failed to report for work after layoff.
Briggs	Vernor (Det.)	1/20/45	Protest of time standards.
Motor Wheel	Lansing	1/20/45	Dispute over inspection rates.
GM Chevy	Grey Iron (Saginaw)	1/22/45	Employees in carburator core job refused to make up discount cores even though they had time to do so. Discount cores are due to poor workmanship and deducted from production.

*This was the plant that in 1943 had the largest strike against employment of Negroes. In this case 96 employees struck in support of Negro workers.

Company	Plant	Start. date	Dispute
Briggs	Vernor (Det.)	1/22/45	Reported late; attended union meeting.
Chrysler	Highland Park	1/24/45	Employees stopped work because of disciplinary action on employee for threatening foreman.
Ford	Willow Run	1/24/45	Protest against dockage of 3 men who lined up at time clock before quitting time. Employees also demanded removal of foreman who imposed this dockage.
Ford	Willow Run	1/24/45	Employees refused to carry out supervisory orders to clean work areas; propriety of order had been upheld by an impartial umpire.*
Ford	Willow Run	1/24/45	Protest against sending 2 employees to labor relations for failure to show and wear badge and for striking a plant protection man.
Ford	Rouge	1/24/45	Refusal to accept change in lunch period starting time.
Ford	Willow Run	1/25/45	3 employees refused to sweep their working areas as requested by supervision; other employees joined them in a protest stoppage.*
Ford	Willow Run	1/25/45	Strike in sympathy with dept. that struck in support of workers disciplined for not showing badge and hitting plant protection man.
Ford	Rouge	1/25/45	Protest against alleged defective machine.
Ford	Willow Run	1/25/45	9 employees ordered to labor relations for refusing to sweep their working area. They succeeded in getting others to join them in a protest stoppage.*
Ford	Willow Run	1/25/45	Protest against disciplinary 2-day layoff of a committeeman for pushing a foreman during an argument.

*This seems to be a common situation in which workers had completed production for the day and foremen tried to prevent them from just standing around by assigning unnecessary tasks.

Company	Plant	Start. date	Dispute
General Motors	Truck & Coach (Calif.)	1/26/45	Protesting failure of NWLB to act favorably on joint request for wage increase.
Chrysler	Dodge (Chi.)	1/26/45	Left plant because they were not paid for time they did not work when lining up at clock before quitting time.
Chrysler	Dodge (Chi.)	1/29/45	10 machine operators sent home for refusing to operate 2 machines as instructed. 23 others walked out in sympathy.
Chrysler	Jefferson (Det.)	1/29/45	Employees stopped work because management requested the men to produce 1 additional unit per hour.
Ferro Mac. & Foundry	Cleveland	1/29/45	Dispute over piecework rates.
Ford	Rouge	1/30/45	Protest against discipline of committeeman for using foul and profane language and threatening foreman.
Intl. Harvester	Indianapolis	1/30/45	Dispute over piecework.
Chrysler	Tank arsenal	1/31/45	Protesting disciplinary action.
Chrysler	Tank arsenal	2/1/45	Protest against discharge of probationary employee discharged for excessive absenteeism.
Briggs		2/6/45	Refusal to reclassify a job to higher rate.
General Motors	Delco	2/7/45	Protesting another employee, outside AFL unit, being given burring work to do on a polishing lathe.
Hudson	Detroit	2/7/45	Engineering employees protested salaried assistant foreman doing hourly rated work in addition to acting as supervisor in absence of foreman.
Hudson	Detroit	2/10/45	Protest dockage of several men for quitting early.
Chrysler	Dodge (Main)	2/10/45	Protesting company giving 2 men a 3-day layoff for loafing.
Continental		2/12/45	Walked out asserting 2 workers disciplined unjustly.

Company	Plant	Start. date	Dispute
Borg-Warner	Detroit	2/14/45	Protesting discharge of 2 employees for refusing to work after transfer by foreman to new jobs.
Ford	Rouge	2/20/45	Complaint that ventilating system was faulty.
Packard	Detroit	2/20/45	Dispute with supervisory employees.
GM Chevy	St. Louis	2/22/45	Sympathy with employee of Truck Assembly Line suspended for refusing to do job assigned by his foreman.
Chrysler	Dodge	2/23/45	Protesting discharge of 8 employees in gear department for refusal to report production count.
Ford	Rouge	2/28/45	Protest against discharge of 2 workers charged with failure to maintain production rates.

because of their need to protect their own position in the plants. It is likely that the varying tendencies of different shops was the result of a complex combination of company policy and administration, union leadership, and composition of the work force. But it should be noted that the number of wildcat strikes does not tell the whole story in considering how many workers were ready and willing to strike during the war.

4

ROLE OF THE LEFT

The parties of the left participated actively in the affairs of the UAW during World War II. While the precise extent of the influence of these parties is difficult to ascertain, it is reasonable to assume that this influence was at a peak during the war years (except for the Socialist Party which was continuing a decline of many years). The organizations most involved with the struggle over the no-strike pledge were the Communist Party and the two Trotskyist organizations, the Socialist Workers Party and the Workers Party. The Socialist Party, although many members and supporters were involved in the situation, did not have the kind of unified trade union policy or party discipline that would have given it cohesive force and impact. The SP members and supporters acted to some degree as individuals, were sometimes on opposite sides in the anti-no-strike pledge campaign, and occasionally worked with people from other organizations to give their views effect. Because of the ambiguous role of the SP in the UAW during World War II, I will not discuss the SP in considering the left organizations.[1]

It is difficult in the nineteen-eighties to comprehend the nature of the politics and organizations of the left in the nineteen-forties. In both the Communist and Trotskyist organizations, party discipline was stronger and more rigid than anything that would be feasible today. Whether party policy was arrived at relatively democratically, as in the Trotskyist organizations, or relatively undemocratically, as in the Communist Party, every member was bound to carry out the program as effectively as possible without any public criticism.

There was also a bitterness between the organizations

that goes beyond the confines of ordinary political debate, much less comradely debate, which must be understood to be able to distinguish the rhetoric of the time from the political reality and to be able to understand the judgments, correct and mistaken, made by the CP, the SWP, and the WP.

The period of World War II was over thirty years closer than our time to the Bolshevik Revolution, the struggle between Stalin and Trotsky, and the rise to power of fascism and nazism. The period of the thirties had been the period of the Moscow trials and the final destruction, through imprisonment, assassination or exile of the leadership of the Russian Bolshevik Party at the time of the revolution. Trotsky had been assassinated by an agent of the Stalinist regime in 1940. The contacts between Communists and their opponents on the left in the United States were often violent. I recall that my last appearance on a street corner platform in New York in the spring of 1939 was attended by the physical overturning of that platform by a band of young people from the Young Communist League who successfully attempted to break up the meeting.

Under these circumstances the harsh rhetoric of the left organizations was not entirely rhetoric. It was often meant literally. It also colored the judgments of these organizations and their evaluation of persons and events. There was also involved, especially in the case of the CP, the deliberate distortion of events and their meaning to achieve acceptance of party policy.

The sharp turn in Communist Party policy as a result of the German invasion of Russia and the shattering of the Hitler-Stalin pact and the attendant embarrassments and difficulties are generally known and have been widely documented. Some aspects of that change, however, need to be mentioned. It has generally been assumed that during the period of the Hitler-Stalin pact the CP encouraged indiscriminate strikes to interfere with American military production and, more generally, to encourage militant opposition to the American status quo. The Allis-Chalmers and North American Aviation strikes are cited as examples. In fact, there are different degrees of militancy in different unions. In unions where CP influence or control was dominant (United Electrical Workers, National Maritime Union, the

furriers union, west coast longshoremen, etc.), there was no great incidence of strikes during the 1939-1941 period.* Strikes with which the CP was associated tended to appear in unions which the CP did not dominate, but in which they had significant points of strength which they wanted to extend.

That would indicate that in those industries in which CP influence was decisive they behaved like all labor bureaucrats. Their first concern was to protect their organizational base. Their militancy was largely verbal. In those unions in which the CP did not exercise control on the national level, the ability of the CP people in the union to develop militant strike policies was pretty clearly a reflection of the basic militancy of the rank and file workers in the situation. All accounts of the Allis-Chalmers and North American Aviation strikes indicate that this is empirically true. But it is also an extension of a point made earlier, that militant programs were always seen to be essential to union electoral victory, that a militant stance (real or fictitious) was imposed on union activists by the rank and file and not the reverse. I do not mean to imply that rank and file workers imposed strike militancy on CP union activists before June 1941. The CP was not that responsive to working class pressure, as their policies following June 1941 made quite clear. Simply that CP militancy before 1941 was subordinated to the bureaucratic needs and realities of union leadership.

CP militants in the labor movement, however, were aware of how different policies would be received by workers. Bob Travis recalls that both he and Wyndham Mortimer

*"Matles produced a clipping from *The New York Times* dated June 12, 1941, which reported that of all strikes in industries holding military contracts from January to June 1941 — before the Soviet Union was attacked by Hitler — not one strike had involved the UE; and that of more than 2 million man-hours lost in labor disputes in war industry, the UE was responsible for none." James J. Matles and James Higgins, *Them and Us*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974, page 207. *The New York Times* was wrong and, naturally, Matles did not try to correct the record. UE locals 441, 1145, and 1225 at Phelps-Dodge, Minneapolis-Honeywell, and Sklar Mfg. conducted strikes during this period. Nevertheless, it remains true that there were remarkably few Communist-led strikes in the "defense" period. Cochran, *Labor and Communism*, pages 164-66.

opposed, within the CP, the unconditional support of the no-strike pledge. Both of them were opposed to strikes during the war but they thought some other way should be found to express an anti-strike point of view, such as compulsory arbitration.[2]

The key to Communist policy during the war was the Soviet Union.[3] There is a rather simple political justification for it. If you believe that the Soviet Union is a socialist society; and if you believe that socialist revolution anywhere depends for its success on the survival of the Soviet Union in the form that it had in the nineteen-forties; then a case can be made for a policy which places the military defense of the Soviet Union above all other considerations. This, of course, is not the classic Leninist position either on the defense of the Soviet State or on the role of Marxists in an imperialist war. However, we can assume that it was a point of view that was acceptable to the members of the Communist Party.

The public defense of CP policy, on the other hand, tended to avoid discussions of socialist revolution and leaned heavily on traditional bourgeois patriotism and defense of the democracies (the U.S., Great Britain, and the Soviet Union) and the defeat of fascism.

The contrast between the CP's position before and after June 1941 is relevant both to understanding the Party's position during the war and how it was received by auto workers who came into contact with party activists and party publications.

In *The Communist* of July 1941, William Z. Foster, CP Chairman, had an article entitled, "Yankee Imperialism Grabs for the Western Hemisphere,"[4] in which he wrote:

> The present war constitutes a violent redivision of the world among the great imperialist powers. The main motive power behind the savage struggle for markets, raw materials, colonies and strategic positions is the ever-deepening general crisis of the obsolete and rotting world capitalist system. Assertions that either group of the warring powers is fighting for democracy and civilization are an insult to the people's intelligence. . . .
>
> United States imperialism is up to its eyes in this bloody and ruthless struggle for empire. It is already in

the war economically, financially and diplomatically, and its Wall Street government is now watching for a favorable opportunity to violate the will to peace of the American people by plunging the country into the war fully as an active belligerent. The strongest imperialist power, naturally the United States is setting itself no modest goals in the war. It, too, is fighting for world hegemony.[5]

The contrasting position appeared in the October 1941 issue of *The Communist*:

> . . . production today — all production, every phase of economic activity — has become a battlefront for national defense, for the defense of the United States. . . .
>
> The chief reason for this lies in the fact that production for the defeat of Hitler Germany, for the crushing of fascism and the triumph of democracy, *now serves a true national interest.* It serves the interests of the United States, of the entire nation and all of its people, and not just the interests of the employers. It serves the interests of the national independence and freedom of our country, of the progress and well-being of our people. . . . For the immediate and ultimate class aims of the American workers, which are in accord with and advance the genuine national interests of the country, necessitate and demand that Hitlerism — which is now the worst and most deadly enemy of the international working class, of all peoples and nations — shall be smashed and wiped off the face of the earth. . . .[6]
>
> The battle of production should therefore be carried on under the following slogans: For National Unity in Defense of the United States! For Full Participation of the United States in the Anti-Hitler Coalition! All Aid to the Soviet Union, Great Britain and China! Mobilize the Entire National Economy for Maximum Production to Crush Hitler and Hitlerism! Expose and Combat the Pro-Hitler Appeasement Forces That Are Sabotaging Production and National Defense! For the Unity of American Labor in the United National Effort Against Hitler! Develop Labor's Organized Strength, Initiative and Activities for Maximum Production for National Defense! . . .[7]
>
> Labor can accelerate the establishment of harmonious and cooperative relations with the technical and production managements by continuing to display greater and ever greater initiative and creativeness in the battle of

> production, in increasing its output to the maximum in the shortest possible time, in pressing for and winning greater support for such policies as set forth in the Murray Plan and in strengthening labor's organizations and independent activities in promoting national defense and national unity. . . .[8]

This is not simply a change in policy resulting from changing circumstances. Britain, the United States, and China (ruled then by Chiang Kai-Shek) had been transformed from imperialist powers to great democracies by virtue of Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union. At the same time Hitlerism had been promoted from one among many imperialist powers to the main, the sole enemy. However one may justify defense of the Soviet Union as legitimate working class policy, defense of American imperialism and class peace on the grounds of national defense and defense of democracy was not quite the same thing, either practically or theoretically. To auto workers who were confronted with this change, there was no visible change in the class character of the American government or American society by which it could be justified. As time went on such face-saving expressions as "technical and production managements" were abandoned and we find Earl Browder saying, "It is strange but true that the working class of this country has the task to force better profits on unwilling employers."[9]

The consequences of the CP position on the war and defense of the Soviet Union in terms of concrete day-to-day policies put the Communists in the extreme right wing of the labor movement. (Among other things, this makes for a rather ambiguous terminology. Historians still tend to call CPers and supporters of the CP in the union movement, left wingers. It has little relation to fact or theory.) The Communist Party endorsed an absolute no-strike pledge so complete that they opposed even the strike against Montgomery Ward, a strike which Harry Bridges ordered his longshore members to break.[10] This was one of the rare strikes during the war that the labor leadership endorsed because of both the extreme reactionary policies of the company and the lack of any connection between retail sales and war production. *The Daily Worker* stated that "Those who violate the no-strike pledge are scabs and should be so treated. Scabs were never

handled with kid gloves."[11]

CP supporters also pressed for incentive pay plans, that is, piece work, a form of payment which the auto workers had been trying desperately to eliminate from the industry. It was denounced as speed-up and defended as the only way under the wartime wage freeze for workers to earn more money. But, although there was no denying that its purpose was to increase production, rarely did supporters of CP policy speak as frankly as Harry Bridges in 1942:

> The majority of the time of officers, of grievance committeemen, of the unions as a whole must go to winning of the war. How? Production. I'd rather say speed-up, and I mean speed-up. The term production covers the boss, government and so on. But speed-up covers the workers — the people who suffer from speed-up are the workers. To put it bluntly, I mean your unions today must become instruments of speed-up of the working-class of America.[12]

Politically, the CP was the least critical segment of the labor movement in its relations with the Roosevelt administration. It accepted proposals to draft workers, it urged endorsement of a fourth term for Roosevelt without setting any conditions, it accepted infringement on the civil liberties of Americans and the rights of workers.[13] It denounced opponents in the labor movement as Trotskyites, spies, traitors and saboteurs, encouraging government action against militants and dissidents. The outstanding example is CP support for the trial of Teamster and Trotskyist leaders under the Smith Act in 1941, an act under which CP leaders were themselves tried and convicted in the postwar years.[14]

Even those labor bureaucrats who collaborated with Communist supporters during the war were often made uneasy by the extreme conservatism of the CP. Sam Sage, who worked with CPers to break and prevent strikes, noted:

> The funny thing was that as a natural effect of Russia being dragged in on our side because Germany attacked her, we found the Stalinists aligned with us. They went all out. In fact, we had to hold them in check many times. They would have gone overboard on this stuff. You could only go so far and then you began to alienate the workers in

> the shop. The Stalinists would have gone so far as to even throw collective bargaining out the window if you could get more planes.[15]

Although the policies of the Communist Party and its supporters are easy to document, the influence of the Party is something else again. Universal problems of gauging political influence are compounded by problems created by the organizational practices of Communists and Trotskyists, above all, confidentiality of membership. When information is available, such as membership figures, it is inherently suspect. The CP is not the only organization that falsifies or exaggerates membership figures for the government, for the public and for its own members.

A study by Nathan Glazer probably comes as close as anything to true figures of CP membership.[16] The first wartime figure presented is one for April 1942 for which date a membership of 50,000, of which 44,000 were registered, is given. It follows a membership of 55,000 (registered) for January 1938, which is the highest figure to that date.[17] However, Glazer notes, "I have one membership report — that for 1942 — in the exact form in which it was given to high party officials. In that report it is asserted the party has a membership of 50,000, of which 44,000 have registered, and this is the highest party membership in history."[18] This obviously puts the 1938 figure in question as well as the second wartime figure, 65,000 for January 1945. The absolute numbers would not matter very much. What is significant, however, is an indication whether the influence or membership of the party was growing or declining. That is, for all practical purposes, unavailable in numerical terms.

Glazer has other estimates on party membership in certain industries. In the auto industry his figures indicate 407 members in May-July 1928, 550 in May 1935, 1,100 in 1939, and 629 in April 1942.[19] The figures indicate a decline in membership during the first year of the war but that is not very helpful. The figures are of doubtful accuracy. Even if accurate they do not indicate whether the decline was the result of party policy during the Hitler-Stalin pact or after the pro-war turn. Bert Cochran indicates that CP union influence declined during the Hitler-Stalin pact period.

> In organizational control, they suffered noticeable losses from the high point of the late thirties, but losses difficult to measure statistically. . . . They had been cut down in the auto unions so that their hold or influence was limited to a number of scattered, though important, local unions.[20]

There were periods of very successful recruiting during the war years in Michigan auto plants. Roy Hudson reported recruitment of 300 new members in Michigan early in a drive for 500 members.[21] Of the 300 recruits, 225 were auto workers. However, the CP had great difficulty holding its new members, especially those from the working class. Although the party generally grew during the thirties and forties, Glazer notes that "even though the party increased fivefold since the late twenties, there had been no such increase in the cadres in important industries."[22] This in spite of the fact that the CP (like the Trotskyists) placed special emphasis on recruiting proletarians in heavy industry. "In Michigan, for example, with its consistently high industrial membership, turnover was also frightfully high. In January 1945, two-thirds of the membership in Detroit, John Williamson reported, had been in the party less than a year. The party there had as high a membership as ever."[23]

There were known centers of CP strength in the Detroit area. Local 155, an amalgamated local on the east side of Detroit, was controlled by John Anderson and Nat Ganley. Ganley was an open spokesman for the CP during the war years. The Plymouth local 51, with "Pop" Edelin and others, was a CP stronghold. In the huge Ford Rouge local 600, CP influence was strong in several of the buildings or units. This gave the CP, in addition to its own members and the circula- of its own press, access to local union newspapers and regular union channels of communication and influence. Much CP influence in the UAW spilled over from their control of other unions. "One third of the C.I.O.'s executive committee, leaders of well over a million workers (a quarter to a third of the C.I.O. as a whole) were identifiably of the left, if not members of the Communist Party."[24]

The activities of the Communist Party in the auto industry undoubtedly influenced the frequency of wildcat strikes and the vote on the no-strike pledge. But much of

that influence was indirect and some of it counter-productive. Starobin discusses one aspect of the problem.

> In the early thirties the Soviet model could be hailed as relevant to the planlessness of America, floundering in crisis. By the end of the decade American Communists had to answer for the hollowness of Soviet democracy, for Stalin's perversion of what the West had believed socialism to be. The U.S. Party defended Stalinism. Failure to have done so would have been unthinkable, given the dynamic and the cohesion which arose out of its own concept of internationalism. Yet the defense was costly. The hold which the Communists had acquired in American life, especially in intellectual and cultural life, became tenuous and uncertain. The protestations that American socialism could be constitutional, democratic, and consonant with the historic American heritage were hard to believe. No matter how nimbly the Party leaped from projecting "collective security" in 1937 to the isolationism of the "phoney war" period in 1940 following the Soviet-German Pact, then to "national unity" on behalf of defending America in concert with Russia in 1941, and finally to the desperate projection in 1944 that the Cold War could be avoided, the American Communists could no longer claim that their hard work in helping to organize America was proof of their integrity as socialists; this integrity had been undermined.[25]

The dedication, energy, and ability of men like Nat Ganley and other spokesmen for the CP were not sufficient to counteract the effect of the relation of the CPUSA to the Soviet Party. The mass quacking at conventions whenever Ganley got up to speak was not simply a right wing tactic. More often it was the reaction of union militants who simply refused to accept the protestations of patriotism.*

But there is another element of the problem faced by the CP which Starobin does not see. It stemmed from "the protestations that American socialism could be constitutional, democratic, and consonant with the historic American

*The quacking, made popular by Walter Reuther in the union faction fighting, stemmed from the cliche, if he walks like a duck and talks like a duck, he must be a duck.

heritage," that is, that socialism was no longer revolutionary. From the time of the Seventh (and last) Congress of the Comintern which adopted the program of people's front (with bourgeois parties) and collective security (with the imperialist powers) in 1934, the CP became dominated by parliamentary concerns and attempted to achieve respectability within the framework of the American two-party system. This is not to say that the CP was not willing to mount militant campaigns. But they were limited to areas such as union organizing and civil liberties and did not include a frontal challenge to American capitalism. As a result, the party recruits during the period of growth in the thirties and forties reflected the party's politics. They tended to have a rather abstract allegiance to socialism and a more concrete allegiance to left-wing Democratic politics and the posts and privileges that came with CP influence in the labor and other movements.

Combined with this political conservatism was another feature of CP policy which was shared with the Trotskyists — an elitism which saw posts in the union movement and contact and influence with leaders as more important than simply rank and file support or activity. Much of the influence of the CP in the forties in the UAW was exercised indirectly through advice and assistance to very traditional types of labor bureaucrats. In such situations the CP (like the Trotskyists) could be very self-effacing, helping to write programs, sending advice in private correspondence and meetings, without public commitments. It was similar in some respects to CP support of President Roosevelt, which never went publicly to the point where it might embarrass the recipient. One result of this kind of support to union leaders (like Thomas, Addes, and Frankensteen) was the appearance of much more influence than was actually wielded. The Trotskyists very often called people like Addes and Frankensteen Stalinists and fellow travelers with what seems, with hindsight, relatively little justification. The coincidence of patriotic and bureaucratic policy between conservative American trade unionists and CP activists was not the result of the bureaucrats deferring to the CP. They were quite capable of working out their own form of capitulation to American capitalism, using the CP to write a leaflet here, corral a few

votes there, and act as a trial balloon on another occasion.

The CP recruited many auto workers during the war and had considerable influence in the auto union. They were especially successful among black workers. Although on a national scale they attempted to restrain the militancy of the black movement, on a personal level and on the shop floor, CP members were the most consistent and principled element in the labor movement in fighting for the rights of black workers.[26] Nevertheless, I think it is possible to say that there was at the same time a decline of CP influence in the rank and file. CP ties with union bureaucrats served to widen the gap with the membership in a period when the union in general was being rapidly bureaucratized. When the CP, after the war, came under attack from the union bureaucrats, there were practically no members ready to stand up for the democratic rights of the CPers in the union.

The Trotskyists were divided into two organizations during World War II. The larger group that was orthodox in its support of Trotsky's policies was the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). It was connected with the Fourth International although formal ties had to be severed because of legal restrictions in the U.S. The dissident Trotskyist group was the Workers Party. The two groups had split in 1940 over the question of defense of the Soviet Union, a dispute brought on by the Stalin-Hitler Pact and the Soviet invasions of Poland and Finland. In 1940 both wings accepted Trotsky's definition of the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers' state. At its first convention in 1941, however, the WP adopted the position that Russia was a "bureaucratic collectivist" society. It was a position that had certain ambiguities but, at the very least, removed from any consideration of either tactics or principle the need to support or defend the Soviet Union.

The SWP was the larger of the two organizations and the one with deeper roots in the auto industry. Membership is very difficult to estimate, but it is unlikely that the SWP had more than 2,000 members nationally. However, the organization had influential people in Detroit, Flint, and elsewhere in the auto industry. John Anderson at the Fleetwood plant, Irwin Bauer at Budd Wheel, both in Detroit, Kermit and Genora Johnson in Flint (she had been the head of the

Women's Emergency Brigade in the GM sitdowns and he had been the first president of the local to which the Chevrolet plants originally belonged) gave substance to SWP influence in the UAW.

The fundamental position of the SWP was that the United States was fighting an imperialist war and that the war was imperialist on both sides. They supported defense of the Soviet Union and of certain colonial nations, such as China. But they also held the Leninist position that such defense by the working class did not involve lessening or limiting the class struggle against its own bourgeoisie.[27]

> In the heat of the "war for democracy," the New Deal is melting away. Its much-vaunted social reforms, the CCC, NYA, WPA, etc., its social and labor legislation are being liquidated. The government war agencies have been tucked away in the pockets of Big Business. Reactionaries of the vilest stripe are being coddled by the administration, not only at home but internationally. The State Department is maintaining toward Petain, Franco and Mannerheim an attitude singularly fraternal for a government that is urging the masses to fight and die "against fascism."[28]

In the labor movement, the SWP was critical of the labor leadership for relinquishing labor's rights and for supporting the war.

> The program of the UAW leadership: support of the war, coalition with the Roosevelt war government, elevation of the War Labor Board as super-arbiter; surrender of the independence of the labor movement — this program the membership accepts at the present juncture of affairs. But the inevitable consequences of this program are the weakening of the union, the demoralization of the membership, inability to organize the new unorganized war industries, general stagnation and decay, the worsening of working conditions and the lowering of wages and living standards. *The leadership has already reconciled itself to these consequences, but the membership is determined to resist them.*[29]

They were, naturally, especially critical of the CP and

of all labor leaders associated with the CP for acceptance of an unconditional no-strike pledge and for support of incentive pay and other retreats from working class gains.

Their public face as an organization was clearly anti-capitalist and anti-war. Eighteen leaders of the Party were convicted in 1941 under the Smith Act of conspiring to overthrow the Government of the United States. The trial took place after the German invasion of Russia. The testimony of James P. Cannon, National Secretary, was published by the SWP as a primer of the Party's views on capitalism, socialism, revolution, the war, etc. Responding to questions from his defense counsel, Cannon indicated the Party's anti-war position:

> Q. Will you state the reasons why the Party would not support a war conducted by the present government of the United States?
>
> A. In general we do not put any confidence in the ruling capitalist group in this country. We do not give them any support because we do not think they can or will solve the fundamental social problems which must be solved in order to save civilization from shipwreck. . . .
>
> Q. What kind of war would you consider a war waged by the present government of the United States?
>
> A. I would consider it a capitalist war. . . . Because America is today a capitalist nation. It is different from the others only in that it is stronger than the others and bigger. We do not believe in capitalist policy. We do not want to conquer any other country. We do not want to gain any colonies. We do not want bloodshed to make profits for American capital.
>
> Q. What is the Party's position on the claim that the war against Hitler is a war of democracy against fascism?
>
> A. We say that is a subterfuge, that the conflict between American imperialism and German imperialism is for the domination of the world. It is absolutely true that Hitler wants to dominate the world, but we think that it is equally true that the ruling group of American capitalists has the same idea, and we are not in favor of either of them.[30]

The concrete carrying out of this anti-war program, however, involved certain contradictions and ambiguities.

The SWP supported the military defense of the Soviet Union and they therefore favored shipment of war materials to Russia. (Some of the Party militants became seamen on the Murmansk run, which delivered war materials to the port in northern Russia.) But this did not really involve anything over which SWP members could have any significant influence. What did modify the Party's influence in the UAW was a political-organizational policy of caution designed to preserve the positions and influence of Party militants in the UAW. This may have been, in part, a consequence of the Smith Act trial which wiped out their strong influence in the Minneapolis Teamsters' Union (with the approval and collaboration of Teamster President Dave Beck). It may also have been the result of a judgment, not entirely unreasonable under the circumstances of a major world war, that there was little anyone could do until the war was over and that a major aim was to preserve the Party cadres for future struggles.

One consequence of this was that SWP members did not play a significant role in organizing the Rank and File Caucus before the 1944 convention of the UAW, although union members close to the SWP did function actively in the Caucus. It is difficult, however, to draw a line separating the policy of caution from the general elitism that was characteristic of the Trotskyist movement which led them to prize posts in the union and contacts with union leaders above direct influence with the rank and file — although trade union policy was never viewed in this form. Theoretically, influence with leaders was a means to influence the ranks and influence among the ranks was a means to achieve leadership or to influence leaders. In practice it never worked out that way. It can be argued that this elitism, which dominated the SWP and the WP, as well as the CP, was more important than the obvious differences in concrete political policy in separating the militants of the left from rank and file workers and led to the loss of support and isolation from the working class of all of these organizations after the end of World War II.

The Workers Party was opposed to all sides in the war. After the German attack on Russia in June 1941, the Political Committee of the WP said in a statement:

> The struggle that every class-conscious and militant worker must conduct against Stalinism and its agents, and conduct now with redoubled energy, is an integral part of the struggle that labor in this country must conduct against those who are still its main enemies — the American imperialists, the ruling class, and their war-mongering spokesmen.[31]

The statement concluded with the slogans that summarized the Party position:

> Against the imperialist war camp of Berlin-Rome-Tokyo!
>
> Against the imperialist war camp of Washington-London-Moscow!
>
> On with the fight for the only sacred and just cause — the victory of the Third Camp, the camp of the suffering peoples, the camp of the exploited workers of all lands, of the disinherited and oppressed masses of the colonies!
>
> Long live the coming victory of freedom and peace, the victory of the international socialist brotherhood of the people![32]

After Pearl Harbor the Party issued an anti-war statement of the National Committee of the WP which stated its opposition to both sides in the war.[33] In January 1942 the Party organ, *Labor Action*, published an article by the National Secretary, Max Shachtman, critical of the SWP for not responding to Pearl Harbor with an official, public, anti-war statement.[34]

The WP was for prosecution of the class struggle and, like the SWP, for an independent labor party. Its attitude toward the working class ranged from abstract statements of working class militancy to concrete complaints about the backwardness of the workers. In February 1942 one of the leading labor strategists of the Party wrote:

> Labor's perspective for this war is only "blood, sweat, tears and toil" insofar as the Roosevelt Administration has plans for it. But the economic conditions, the class interests, the rich traditions, the glorious opportunities for expansion, and the growing political consciousness of the American workers, indicate that labor has for itself, in a

> groping, unclear fashion at present, to be sure, a different perspective. For the American labor movement is now the mightiest in the world. It hasn't gone through the terrible defeats and demoralization of the European working class. It is fresh, growing, militant and unafraid, as its history shows.
>
> Labor has come of age in America.[35]

A few months later, in an analysis of the 1942 UAW convention, the Party's Labor Secretary began his discussion with:

> The most significant occurrences of the recent United Auto Workers' convention demonstrate anew the woefully inadequate political preparation of the American workers for playing a class role in the Second Imperialist World War.[36]

In his conclusion he noted:

> Fully 95 per cent of the delegates to the UAW convention disagreed with the antics and the proposals of the leadership. Yet this leadership came away with the victory. The militants among the delegates talked and talked and pounded. But their fury and militancy accomplished comparatively little. The reason is easy to see. These militants had no political or organizational program. They do not understand capitalism and bourgeois-democratic society. They confuse politics with parliamentarianism. They do not think in terms of working class politics and of the urgent need for militant and independent working class political action.[37]

The attitude of the WP toward the CP, and, in particular, the validity of its judgments appear different thirty years later than they did at the time. As was indicated earlier, there was justification for the intense hostility between Communists and Trotskyists in the historical and political developments of the preceding two decades. However, the intensity of that hostility tended to distort judgment. For example, reports from the 1943 UAW convention clearly exaggerate the role and influence of the CP (as the CP exaggerated the role and influence of the Trotskyists).

> The Addes-Frankensteen group was definitely the camp of the Stalinist Communist Party. . . . This was a faction that followed the Stalinist political line with a high degree of consistency under the direct leadership of the Stalinist whips on the floor of the convention.[38]

> The Addes-Frankensteen faction was made up in large part of the Stalinists (the Communist Party-liners), was supported by them and in the main organized by them.[39]

There is no basis in fact for these judgments. In part, I suppose, it was a reflection of a paranoia directed at the CP. In part, also, it reflected an unwillingness or an inability to see American labor bureaucrats dominated by an eagerness to support American capitalism who only incidentally made common cause with genuine CP members and supporters. These distortions of judgment help to explain the movement of Max Shachtman and the WP, over a number of years, to a position of bitter anti-Communism. From being opposed equally to both imperialist camps, the dominant wing of the WP moved toward viewing Communists as the main enemy, to the point where Shachtman ultimately found the McGovern wing of the Democratic Party too soft on Communism and preferred the Johnson-Humphrey-Jackson wing.

Organizationally, the WP was much weaker than the SWP in working class centers such as Detroit, northern Ohio, and so on. Their membership, buttressed by the bulk of the youth organization (the Young People's Socialist League, Fourth International), was only slightly smaller than the SWP but it was overwhelmingly middle class and concentrated in New York City. As a result, there was an organized drive to "proletarianize" the Party by colonizing young students and others in key industrial centers. Detroit was one such center. In the summer of 1942 a half dozen young members from the east joined the single Detroit member to form what became one of the most active and influential branches of the WP. Over the next few years contacts were made, occasional recruits, and a degree of influence attained in a few locals in the Detroit area at Ford and Chrysler plants and some independents. The Detroit branch distributed an average of 5,000 copies per week of the weekly paper, ***Labor Action***. These were usually distributed at plants where members worked or

where strikes had taken place. Whenever the members fell behind and thousands of undistributed copies accumulated, a distribution was arranged at the huge Rouge plant of the Ford Motor Company, where it was a simple matter to distribute thousands of copies in a single afternoon.

Generally speaking, all sorts of left-wing papers circulated freely in the plants during the war. There was rarely evidence of hostility on the part of workers and most often there was interest. Whether specific policies and attitudes were acceptable to workers or not, radical ideas, socialist ideas, anti-capitalist ideas, and anti-war ideas were common currency among Detroit auto workers during World War II.

The WP also had some influence in scattered locals around the country such as Brewster Aircraft in Long Island City, N.Y., and a Buick plant in Chicago (Local 6).

The WP tended to be more aggressive in seeking out militant workers during the war. The difference in organizational policy with the SWP might simply have been the result of its lack of an industrial base that could be threatened by rash actions in wildcat strikes and the like and its need to establish significant working class contacts. In this it was helped by the extremely reactionary Detroit daily papers, all of which attempted to intimidate striking workers by publishing their names and addresses, threatening them with blacklisting. It was remarkably easy to make contact with such workers all through the war. In 1944 such contacts began to provide the basis for organizing the Rank and File Caucus.

Caucus allegiances in the UAW were sometimes contradictory, and some aspects of the problem will be dealt with in Chapter 6, but generally the Trotskyists in the union functioned in the Reuther caucus (but with considerable criticism of the Reuther leadership), while the Communists functioned in the Addes-Frankensteen caucus.

Once again, it is impossible to make a quantitative judgment of the extent of the influence of the Trotskyist and Communist organizations. The influence, however, was real on two levels. In certain specific situations the left parties had power and a degree of control. But more generally, they made available to large numbers of auto workers ideas about socialism and capitalism that went beyond the specifics of

wartime problems. It is reasonable to assume that auto workers absorbed these ideas and transformed them in ways that suited their own purposes and the possibilities available to them.

5

MECHANICS AND MINERS

In addition to the parties of the old left there were also two trade union organizations that exerted an influence on auto workers and their willingness to strike during the war. These were the Mechanics Educational Society of America, a small union centered in Detroit and led by Matthew Smith, and the United Mine Workers of America led by John L. Lewis.

The MESA actually predated the UAW. It was formed in 1932 to organize skilled workers in Detroit and the industrial midwest and in 1933 established itself in Detroit with a successful strike. "The name is peculiar because of the fact that even to mention the word 'union' in any plant in Detroit was very unhealthy. . . . The name was chosen deliberately to confuse the bosses." [1]

> The three main spark plugs and organizers of that society or union, as it really was, were Matthew Smith, a member of the Socialist Party; John Anderson, a member of the Communist Party who ran for governor on the Communist Party ticket; and John Wiseman, a German immigrant. All of these people were foreign born: Matt Smith, John Anderson and John Wiseman . . . . [T]he Mechanics Educational Society started organizing in April or May of 1933 and by October of 1933 had called a strike involving probably four or five thousand mechanics in hundreds of plants scattered throughout the Detroit area. They won that strike and got union recognition for practically all the job shops in the Detroit area. . . . Now it is true that the MESA did not succeed in organizing and getting recognition for their union in General Motors, Ford and Chrysler; but they did call effective strikes in Fisher Body in Detroit and in Buick in Flint. . . . And many of the workers

> who participated in the MESA strike of 1933 became the leaders of the 1937 sit-down strikes, both in Detroit and in Flint.[2]

When the UAW began to organize on an industrial basis, two developments modified the MESA. One was the withdrawal of leading Communists and other leftists in order to be in what they determined to be the mainstream of the American labor movement. "There was one local on the east side, which later became local 155 of the UAW with John Anderson as the leader. And then we had a group in the Fisher Body local. . . . What we had in Fisher Body 23 became local 157 of the UAW."[3] "Bert Cochran, who was a leader of the MESA in Cleveland and conducted strikes there, brought his entire section of the MESA, or brought a large part of the MESA in the Cleveland area, into the UAW in early 1937."[4]

This added to the intense competition with the CIO which led to the second factor, a retreat from a policy of craft unionism to a policy of industrial unionism. By the beginning of World War II, the relative strength of MESA and UAW had been established, with the MESA very much the smaller. Although it organized on an industrial basis, most of the shops under MESA contract were tool and die shops. Only a handful were production shops, including a Detroit plant of Kelvinator (later American Motors).

Although there was considerable tension and conflict between MESA and the UAW and the auto workers overwhelmingly chose to go with the UAW, the MESA was generally respected among auto workers for its pioneer organizing and for its uncompromising militancy.

The MESA was distinguished from all other unions by its structure.

> Our constitution and bylaws are much different than any other organization inside the AF of L-CIO. . . . We have a rank and file committee that is a national committee with convention authority and they have the final say on anything in the MESA and full control of the officers. We call it the National Administrative Committee. In order to be a member of that committee you must actually work in the plant. You cannot be a full-time paid official, not the local or the national.[5]

In other words, the full-time officers of MESA could be hired and fired by the National Administrative Committee, which consisted of people working full time in the shops. However, although the MESA was considerably more democratic than even the UAW in its democratic heyday, the form cannot be taken as equivalent to the substance. Matt Smith was the General Secretary of the MESA, its leading official and public spokesman. Although he was subject to the control of the National Administrative Committee, he, in fact, dominated the Committee through the force of his personality and his politics. Much of what MESA represented to Detroit workers was embodied in Matt Smith.

Smith had been active in the Amalgamated Engineers Union in England, organizing apprentices.[6] In 1917 he had taken part in an unauthorized wartime strike.[7] "Socialist, atheist, iconoclast, Matt refused to become a citizen of the United States on principle: 'I'm an internationalist, a citizen of the human race.'"[8] "Smith came to the United States from England in 1927. He took out first papers shortly after his arrival but never completed the naturalization process.

"'Maybe I don't feel I would make a good citizen. Perhaps I will wait a few more years to make sure,' he said jokingly. . . .

"He was known to have pacifistic leanings in the first World War. Of the present conflict, he says that 'the job of winning it must be done.'"[9]

The MESA was one of the few unions during World War II that never gave a no-strike pledge. It also participated frequently in strikes. The vituperation directed at Matt Smith by the Detroit newspapers for daring to lead his union in strikes and for being an alien in addition, an alien on principle, was unparalleled. It was also familiar to any resident of Detroit, as was the ability of the MESA to preserve its gains. An example of what appeared in the Detroit newspapers is the following from a *Detroit Free Press* editorial:

> No, this blow for Hitler and Hirohito has not been struck by an American, thank God!
>
> This strike against the Government of the United States has been called by a foreigner.
>
> Matthew Smith, executive head of the Mechanics' Educational Society, is a radical labor agitator who came to

this country from England in 1928 because he was starving 'over 'ome.'

Smith has refused even to apply for American citizenship and jeers at the very idea. He will have you know that he is a citizen of the world. . . .

When the AFL and the CIO went on record through their national officers that there would be no authorized strikes during the war, Smith thought that very stupid of them. He refused to make any such pledge. "Such action," he said at the time, "would prevent us from exploiting labor in war time."[10]

The eyes and limbs and lives of American youth is the price we will have to pay.

In our book there is just one word to describe this refusal to give our boys the weapons they need. . . .[11]

In reporting an MESA strike in 1942, the *Detroit News* gave an indication of what so infuriated the press, the government and the labor leaders:

> Labor leaders here, however, wondered whether Smith was so vitally interested in the fate of the eight electricians, or whether he seized upon their dismissal to advertize his "we can strike if we want to" policy to skilled workers now enrolled in the UAW-CIO, whose wage rates were recently frozen by the WLB.[12]

It was not often, however, that the press would expose the fact that workers were likely to be attracted to a policy of rejecting the no-strike pledge.

During the war, in part to protect itself against the major unions which were functioning with considerable government support, the MESA became involved in attempting to organize a third labor federation, the Confederated Unions of America (CUA). It never became a serious force on the American scene and ultimately became more of a problem than the MESA was willing to be involved with. Too many of the independent unions which became part of the CUA were company unions or extremely right wing. The MESA withdrew after a couple of years.[13]

Much of the philosophy of Matt Smith and the MESA was presented in testimony before a Senate subcommittee investigating production in Detroit:

Sen. Ferguson. How many members have you in the Detroit area?

Mr. Smith. . . . about 32,000, mostly skilled men.

The Chairman. And how many have you in the country at large?

Smith. . . . probably about 64,000 now. . . .

Sen. Ferguson. . . . Did you organize [the MESA]?

Smith. No; I wouldn't say that. . . .

Sen. Ferguson. Who was really the organizer?

Smith. Some very unscrupulous employers in this area must be given credit for organizing our union. . . . Any place you cannot organize, you must be patient and allow the boss to do it for you. He is usually tempted to do just that.

The Chairman. Has your organization signed the non-strike pledge?

Smith. Oh my goodness no. . . .

We would not, and we don't intend to refrain from striking, as we have not as yet met any employers that are worthy of being given that pledge. I am afraid they might be tempted to touch some of our members and discriminate against them, and if they ever do that, the full weight of our organization will be used, peacetime, wartime, in season or out of season, to protect our membership.

Sen. Ferguson. No matter what happens with the country, your membership comes first.

Smith. Listen, Senator, I come from a country that had 91 wars in 100 years. I am getting a bit cynical about them. I know we have always been right, but just expect me to be just slightly disillusioned. . . .

I am a little cynical about the Versailles Treaty, about the depression that occurred in Germany by the Versailles Treaty. I am rather dubious about what would happen in any country during an acute depression. I know what nearly happened in this country, in Louisiana; we nearly got dizzy after Huey Long. . . .

The Chairman. How do you feel about Yalta?

Smith. I think the Big Three were trying to imitate another Big Three — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I don't know whether they are doing a good job or not. . . .

Sen. Ferguson. Do you get in the plants at all?

Smith. I get in all the plants.

Sen. Ferguson. Where your operations are?

Smith. I have no trouble at all in getting in any plant

where we have a contract. At the beginning, of course, we had some difficulty, but if we couldn't get in the plant, I brought the boys out of the plant to talk to me, and then after that I was allowed in the plant. [Laughter.]

Sen. Ferguson. In other words, you called a strike.

Smith. That is right.

Sen. Ferguson. A walk-out. Then you would be able to get in with them.

Smith. That is right. I mean we understand each other. We understand that we are in an unremitting economic war with the employers. They perfectly understand.

We are not similar to the organizations that gave evidence today. We are always trying to encroach on the managerial prerogatives. . . .

We don't know what those prerogatives are. They change from year to year. And, as far as we can, we will encroach until we eliminate the management, if that becomes necessary.

Sen. Ferguson. In other words, you want to take over the management.

Smith. If the management is incapable of resisting us in our desire to take over. . . .

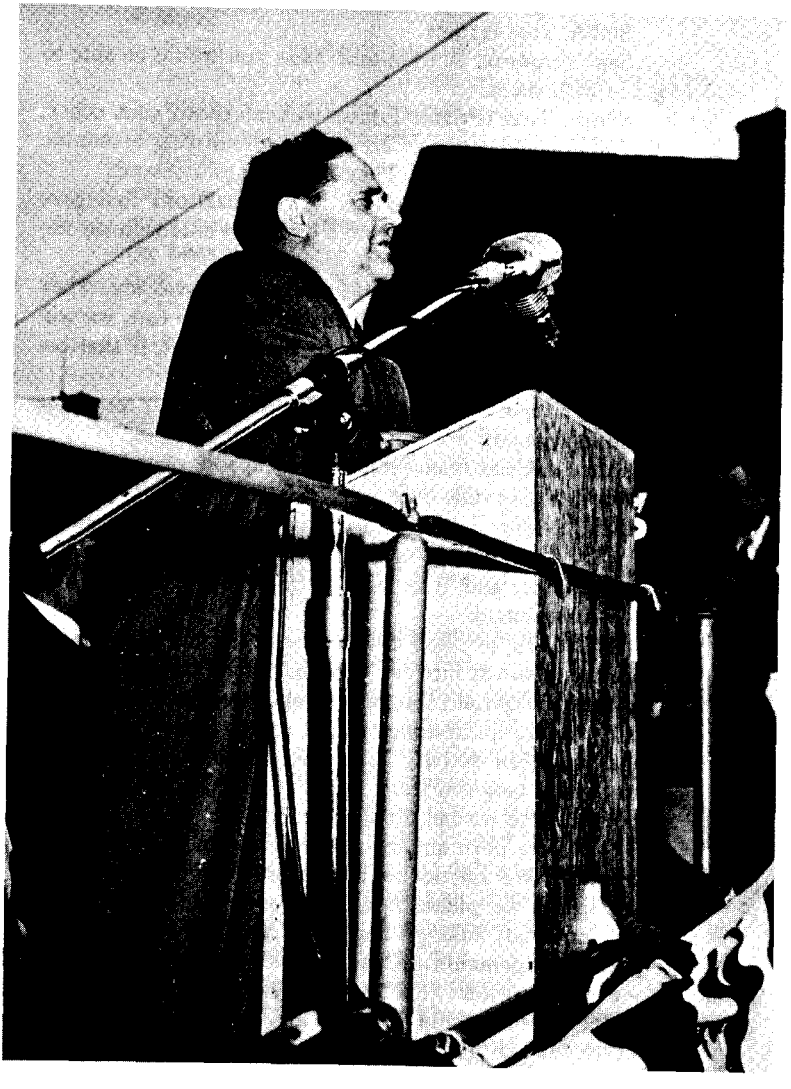
Sen. Ferguson. You are of the opinion, in the plants you are now having unions, that they are incapable of management, and it is your union's duty to take over that management.

Smith. Oh, no; you mustn't speak for me, Senator. . . . Don't put words into my mouth. We are out completely for the managerial prerogatives, and the managements we deal with are quite honest about it. They are trying to see that no union activity is carried on in their plants. So somewhere between those points we declare an occasional armistice, and we call them contracts. . . .

We are both amiable. Everybody knows we are not dishonest. We are not saying we are going to show them how to run the plants, but if they abdicate, we shall advocate somebody taking them over, preferably us, but most of our managements are too astute to let us get that far.

Sen. Ferguson. . . . It has been stated here by the C.I.O., if I state them correctly here, that their province is not to take over management. They stop at foremen. Is yours the same?

Smith. No. We have some foremen organized and will



Matthew Smith. (*Detroit News*)

continue to organize foremen in our union.* We think the line, the economic line, should be drawn between all the people who make any contribution to the national economic pool. That takes in managers, superintendents. And opposition should be people who live on unearned income and the stockholders.

Sen. Ferguson. In other words, you take in your union all of management?

Smith. No; we haven't been able to persuade them to come in, but we do take foremen. [Laughter.] . . .

Sen. Ferguson. The only people, then, you wouldn't take in are the stockholders?

Smith. That is right. I don't think they live good enough lives, else we mix with all kinds of people. We draw the line somewhere. [Laughter.] . . .

Sen. Ferguson. You think most of your members think the same thing?

Smith. It just depends how persuasive I have been. I don't know; I keep on being elected by giving out that philosophy. That is all I can tell you, Senator.

Sen. Ferguson. And, at least, it is worth $7,500 a year. [Smith's salary.]

Smith. It is worth a lot more. That is what I get. [Laughter.] . . .

[An exchange developed on the degree of efficiency in Detroit factories.]

Smith. Our production is retarded in the Detroit area from possible potential production for various reasons: No. 1, there is an acute shortage of labor during wartime. The average man and woman in the plant is not saturated and permeated with the fear of losing their jobs. That fear is not there. The substitute, of course, should be that they want to go in for all-out production because of the war effort. My members, peculiarly enough, have been conditioned from the first time they started work, to the incentive of wages. They work for wages. They don't know how to work for idealistic causes. They don't know how to work for the four, five, or six freedoms; they work for cash.

During the war, because of the acute shortage of labor, they were, for the first time in 10 years, in an economic position to bargain with the employers and extract

*The inclusion of foremen may be as much a skilled trades traditional practice as socialist principle.

more remuneration than ever before since the World War I.

This bargaining potential was taken away from them by Government action. I personally object to that. I don't agree that, under a system of free enterprise, there should be any wage stabilization. It appears to me that free enterprise means that you may get $10 a week or $100 a week. It depends upon all kinds of economic factors. It depends upon the number of people available for each job. It depends upon your capacity to bargain or fight it out with the employer. But there is nobody says that this relative state of justice or injustice is hereby stabilized. That should not be. . . .

Now, it is my opinion the wage stabilization was put over and probably retarded production 10 to 20 percent. It would have been much better, in my opinion, to let this bargaining go on and wages go up; dividends would go down, and, of course, the wages we did receive would be taxed to death, but we would have the pleasure of the money passing through our hands. [Laughter.] And, also, when the war was over and the taxation ceased, we would have the increments we had made by bargaining during a favorable economic position for unions. . . .

Sen. Ferguson. Who would you have own the capital fixtures and the plant?

Smith. Oh, probably the workers.

Sen. Ferguson. The workers?

Smith. Sure, if necessary. Nationalization with democratic control may be the method, but don't ask me to draw a blueprint of the future. All I know is that this system is pretty damn lousy and can't get very much worse.

Sen. Ferguson. What you are advocating is that the state own the capital fixtures?

Smith. I am not. I am advocating that some other motive rather than acquisitiveness be the dominating factor in our economic life. . . .

I do want to say why I think that production is down. I want you to get a picture of a man working in the plant now. Of course, he compares everything to pre-war. For the first time the foreman is polite to him. The foreman tries to persuade him to come in 6 or 7 days a week. In a rather mysterious way, instead of being just a piece of material, as he was before the war, to be discarded whenever necessary, he suddenly finds he has been put on a pinnacle and treated in a civilized fashion.

For the first time he is getting wages where he can

feed his wife and kids and buy some luxuries, and he is having comparatively decent times.

Somebody comes along and says that, "What you ought to do is to concentrate on finishing this war as quickly as possible in order that you can go back to the bad old days of peace when you could work 3 months a year. You could be laid off. You could exhaust your unemployment insurance. You could go down to the welfare and plead for a basket of groceries. You could be kicked off the lawn of the White House, perhaps. All these things could happen to you."

Now, those are peacetime amenities of civilization that are not very attractive to the average war worker. The average war worker that I talk to will pay lip service, as the labor union and management leaders did here today, that they dedicate their whole lives to the successful prosecution of the war. But the average man, in my opinion, just below the surface, is very apprehensive as to what is going to happen to him when the war is over. He knows that 51 percent of world production prior to the war, machine-tool production, was in the United States. The only thing he doesn't know is, when. Nevertheless, he is apprehensive. He has a right to be apprehensive. Everybody is telling him he shouldn't worry about the post-war period; he should concentrate on winning the war, and if he is thrown into the gutter, well, Nature has a way of throwing its filth into the gutter; he should stay there.[14]

In wide-ranging testimony Smith defended the idea of a peaceful road to socialism. He opposed incentive pay. He opposed both the check-off of union dues and maintenance of membership on the grounds that it made unions soft and less concerned with the needs of their members.

The views of Matt Smith have been quoted extensively, not because they were acceptable to all of the members of the MESA or to auto workers generally, but because they were widely circulated in the Detroit area in the reporting of these hearings and in the earlier years of the war, in the frequent and vitriolic attacks on Smith whenever the MESA was involved in a strike.

Auto workers were familiar with the willingness of the MESA to maintain and extend its gains through the use of strikes. But MESA went even further than an occasional strike against a particular employer. In February of 1944

the MESA called out its members in 30 plants in the Detroit-northern Ohio area in protest against a decision of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). "The NLRB had granted the United Automobile Workers (CIO) permission to hold an election at the Willys tool room in Toledo where MESA had bargaining rights."[15] Matt Smith charged the NLRB with favoring CIO and AFL unions, refused to respond to subpoenas requiring his appearance at hearings, and, in general, made headlines across the country over his union's rejections of the no-strike pledge.[16] Although they had very little in common, Smith was compared to John L. Lewis in this action, probably because Lewis, in a much larger series of strikes the previous year, had been at the center of a massive confrontation with the federal government.

John L. Lewis, the United Mine Workers, and miners generally have always had a special relationship with and meaning for auto workers. In discussing this, it should be clear that I am not discussing the internal history of the United Mine Workers, Lewis' ruthless achievement of power in the union at the expense of the near destruction of the union in the twenties, and his dictatorial control of the union structure through control of the union's executive board, of which a clear majority were Lewis appointees who were not subject to election by the ranks.

Miners and auto workers were connected in three ways.[17] Many auto workers were former miners who came from what was later known as Appalachia for the easier work and better pay of the auto shops. The miners' union was a mainstay of the CIO, providing money, organizers and other kinds of assistance to the newer, younger unions, such as the UAW. (To unions which did not pre-date the CIO, such as the Steelworkers, the UMW contributed as much of an undemocratic and bureaucratic structure as it was possible to get away with.) Finally, John L. Lewis, with his impressive appearance and flair for both strategy and public controversy, had captured a warm place in the hearts of auto workers. In the forties, workers still remembered and discussed a meeting in the back room of a bar near the Dodge plant in the thirties at which Lewis handed over $50,000 to a group of Dodge workers with the simple injunction to organize Dodge.

"A wildcat anthracite strike which began December 30,

1942, and continued through January 22, 1943, provided the catalyst for nationwide coal miner unrest in 1943."[18] It involved between 15,000 and 25,000 of the 80,000 anthracite miners.[19] There are various interpretations of the causes of that strike. On the face of it, it was in protest against a 50-cent dues increase announced by the union. That this was the cause is rejected by Saul Alinsky[20] and Art Preis.[21] Alinsky seems to reject the idea that miners would strike against their own union. Preis seems to be trying to prove, in the narrowest terms, that the miners were striking against the government. J. R. Sperry's analysis seems to me to be closest to reality. He insists that the initial cause was the dues increase, but that much more was involved.

> . . . the anthracite wildcat strike accurately demonstrated the intensity of coal miner anger at the wage policies of the Roosevelt administration, and at the outset the strike was primarily a reaction to Lewis's ineffective leadership.[22]

Although Lewis was charged across the nation with manipulating and encouraging the strike (and the official strikes which followed), he tried desperately to bring it to an end. It was a significant challenge to his leadership. At one point Thomas Kennedy and local district leaders proposed "that wildcat strikers be dropped from the rolls of the UMW, while Lewis primarily directed his vindictiveness at the anthracite strike leaders."[23] The dues increase was forgotten in the subsequent events, but Lewis found himself forced to demand a significant wage increase for the miners in order to reassert his control of the situation. He announced a demand for a $2 a day wage increase for both anthracite and bituminous miners when their contracts expired on March 31 (bituminous) and April 30 (anthracite), 1943. As Sidney Lens has noted, "Lewis reflected the mineworkers' militancy and, although he did not yield to it entirely, he was wise enough to run with labor's tide rather than against it."[24]

On January 15, 1943, the National War Labor Board ordered the strike to end. The miners responded by extending the strike. The Board referred the strike to President Roosevelt who then, clothing himself in the mantle of "Commander in Chief," ordered the miners to return. They took a

few extra days and finally returned to work on January 22, responding to government and union pressure and Lewis's pledge to demand a substantial wage increase in the next contract.

On January 30 miners were enraged by the award of a 23-cent per ton price increase to western Pennsylvania soft coal operators by the Office of Price Administration. In this period, CIO and AFL leaders were publicly and privately attempting to pressure the administration into a modification of the Little Steel Formula. Instead, on February 9, the NWLB rejected a wage increase for packinghouse workers at the major meat packers, among the lowest paid of unionized workers.

In March, Lewis began contract bargaining with the bituminous coal operators. Among the demands presented were retention of the basic 35-hour, five-day week; a $2 per day wage increase; and portal-to-portal pay, that is, pay for the time spent travelling from the mine entrance to the work face. On March 15, Lewis indicated that the union was prepared to strike to win its demands. Some time later, testifying before a Senate committee, he indicated that the no-strike pledge was not necessarily binding. In April, "Roosevelt in a comprehensive executive order designed to 'hold the lines' re-emphasized the imperative necessity of 'freezing wages and prices.'"[25] This, in effect, was an order to the NWLB not to breach the Little Steel Formula. Lewis offered to withdraw all the wage demands if the operators would guarantee a six-day week for the life of the contract. This was supported by John Steelman of the Federal Conciliation Service. He quickly disappeared from the negotiations. On April 22 the Secretary of Labor certified the dispute to the War Labor Board. Lewis refused to recognize the Board or appear before it. The Board ordered uninterrupted production of coal. The miners responded by beginning walkouts in Alabama and western Pennsylvania. Lewis announced that if there was no new contract agreed to by the termination of the old one, the miners would not "trespass" on the property of the operators on May 1.

President Roosevelt threatened to use all his powers to keep the miners working. Despite his threats, on May 1 all the union bituminous mines were shut down. Roosevelt

ordered government seizure of the mines on May 1 and turned them over to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes to operate. (That turnover was in part fictional since, apart from Ickes himself and an American flag flying at each mine, the operation continued, at Ickes' instruction, to be run by the old owners and managers.) "Ickes then declared the miners were working 'for the government' and ordered them back to work.

> The miners didn't budge. . . . On Sunday night of May 2 Roosevelt was scheduled for a nation-wide radio address to the miners. Just before the President's broadcast, Lewis called a press conference and announced that starting Tuesday morning, May 4, another 15-day truce would be observed. . . .[26]

The miners, in their local unions, voted to return to work for the truce period and waited until May 4, rather than May 3, to return to the pits.

CIO and AFL officials had voted with the government on the War Labor Board. They had publicly denounced the miners' strike and Lewis. "UAW-CIO President R. J. Thomas said that the miners' walkout was 'a political strike against the President.'"[27] The attacks on Lewis and the miners in the press all across the country were fantastically bitter and vituperative. If the strike had not been political at the start (which it was) it was made political at the insistence of all the elements in government, business, and the labor movement which opposed it.

Nevertheless,

> In Detroit on May 2, the day of Roosevelt's radio call to the miners, a thousand delegates representing 350,000 members of the United Auto Workers in Michigan overrode their national officers and adopted by overwhelming vote a resolution to support not only the UMW's demands but the strike as well. The UAW national leaders, which included President Thomas and Vice-President Reuther, introduced and backed a minority resolution opposing the strike. . . . But the delegates would not be swayed. Only a half dozen or so . . . openly voted against the majority resolution to back the coal strike.[28]

This sentiment was further reflected by numbers of resolutions passed by local UAW unions supporting and encouraging the miners.[29]

The battle between the miners on the one hand and the government and mine operators on the other extended through most of 1943, with the bitterness of the attack on the miners in the press steadily mounting. But the working class response was almost as solid as the miners'.

On June 1, 530,000 miners went on strike. The operators, becoming aware that they could no longer rely solely on the power of the NWLB to take care of the miners' demands, began to negotiate. Settlements seemed to be taking shape around $1.50 per day portal-to-portal pay, a wage increase that would crack the Little Steel Formula. The NWLB ordered negotiations to cease until the miners went back to work. The union ordered a return to work on June 7 to continue to June 20. In the negotiations that followed (with the mine operators, not with the government which nominally owned the mines), agreement was reached on $1.30 per day in portal-to-portal pay.

At the same time, flushed with anti-labor sentiment, the House of Representatives passed the Smith-Connally War Labor Disputes Act, an anti-strike bill that gave statutory power to the NWLB. On June 18 the NWLB turned down the agreement between the UMW and the mine operators. The miners began striking as soon as the word went out, not waiting for the deadline of June 20. Once again the strike was complete. Despite the fact that the UMW had won $1.50 portal-to-portal pay from the Illinois mine operators and $1.30 in Pennsylvania, the labor members of the NWLB had joined in rejecting the proposed contracts.

Two days after the strike began, Lewis announced another truce, a return to work until October 31, but conditioned on the government continuing to operate the mines. On June 25 Roosevelt vetoed the Smith-Connally Act, on the grounds that it was not strong enough, and Congress passed it over his veto. Complicated maneuvers and threats continued for the remainder of the summer, including the threat to apply the sanctions of the new law against Lewis and the UMW. Further agreements were reached with the Illinois mine operators, again rejected by the NWLB. Wildcats

began to spread. In October, Ickes announced the return of the mines to the private operators. The strikes became general before the October 31 deadline, with neither Lewis nor the government able to contain them.

Ultimately, the coal operators and the government accepted defeat. On November 20 the NWLB handed down a decision which ended the Little Steel Formula, accepting the portal-to-portal pay with minor modifications.

The ability and willingness of the miners to take on the government in a series of battles and to emerge with a significant victory was evident to everyone in the country, not least of all the auto workers. It was not that this convinced the auto workers that the no-strike pledge was a false policy. It was that it confirmed what was a widespread sentiment to begin with. The obvious dual class standard of the government in the rigidity of wage controls as opposed to the flexibility of price controls was simply brought out into the open by the miners' strikes. It may have convinced some waverers among the auto workers. But, more importantly, it lent legitimacy and strength to those who opposed the no-strike pledge. It also undercut the power and prestige of the UAW leadership as a result of their openly taking sides with those who were attacking the miners.

6

CULMINATION AND CONTRADICTION

In 1941 there had been more strikes than in any year since 1937 and more workers involved than in any year since 1919. A substantial drop in the number of strikes took place in 1942, the first full year of American participation in the war. However, as the war continued, the number of strikes kept rising. In 1943 there was a sharp rise in the number of strikes, more than doubling the number of man-days idle. These figures include the coal strikes. In 1944 there was another increase in the number of strikes to the highest point in this century. There was, however, a smaller increase in the number of workers involved and, reflecting the shorter duration of the wildcat strikes, a decline in the number of work days lost.[1]

Included in the increased number of strikes in 1943 were large and important strikes in the auto industry. In May there were strikes at five Chrysler plants in the Detroit area.[2]

The strikes in the auto industry, coming in a year of widely publicized miners' strikes, were accompanied by growing hostility to the no-strike pledge. An interviewer reported that Chrysler strikers' attitude toward the no-strike pledge was that, "Without exception, so far as I was able to discover, they maintain that they have never agreed to any such thing."[3] Supporting this tendency was a statement by John L. Lewis in March that he held the no-strike pledge no longer binding.[4] Perhaps adding to the irritation of workers were signs of increasing threats and pressure against strikers. On two occasions Brig. Gen. B. Smith ordered Alabama draft boards to reclassify striking workers to remove their deferments.[5] The demand that surfaced in the Florida Senate for a one-year prison term for strikers or those who cause strikes

in war work was not unusual.[6] Such demands increased in number and vindictiveness as the war continued and the number of strikes mounted.

That the problem of discriminatory use of the draft against militant workers had become pretty general was indicated by the adoption of a resolution on the problem at the 1943 convention of the UAW. It charged, among other things, that local draft boards were dominated by professionals and businessmen, that "management has used the draft for discriminatory purposes against active union members, has shown favoritism in protecting from the draft, workers less essential than others being inducted,"[7] etc. It called for the establishment of Labor-Management Committees on deferment at the factory level.

Other kinds of pressure against workers surfaced in the coal strikes. "Thirty coal miners — local union presidents, checkweighmen, committeemen, and ordinary rank and file militants of the United Mine Workers of America in Southwestern Pennsylvania — have been indicted by a federal grand jury at Pittsburgh on charges of violating the notorious Smith-Connally law."[8]

At the end of 1942, Buick local 599 in Flint called for a special convention to rescind the no-strike pledge. Support came from the Brewster Aircraft local 365 (Long Island City, N.Y.) and local 719 in Chicago.[9]

In July 1943, the convention of the Michigan CIO adopted a generally militant program and urged the national CIO to rescind the no-strike pledge if the Little Steel formula were not broken and genuine equality of sacrifice were not adopted.[10]

At the UAW Convention in October 1943, however, the leadership was able to keep a tighter rein on the delegates. The majority and minority resolutions introduced on the no-strike pledge were both for unconditional retention of the no-strike pledge. The difference between the majority resolution, introduced by Victor Reuther, and the minority resolution, introduced by Shelton Tappes of Ford local 600, was trivial. The majority called for government operation of plants in which management did not bargain in good faith. The minority called for political action to accomplish labor's ends. Finally, the majority accepted the political action

clause of the minority resolution and the two were joined together in one resolution. The discussion was minimal, with Emil Mazey of the Briggs local 212 and Jackson Crump of local 599 speaking against the pledge. The pledge was reaffirmed in a hand vote.[11]

In 1944 the conflict between the UAW leadership and rank and file workers who wildcatted with increasing frequency was intensified. There were also other signs that workers were looking for new directions in their search for an end to governmental restrictions and for ways to assert their own power.

At a Detroit conference on March 4 and 5, 1944, delegates representing 85 Michigan AFL and CIO unions formed the Michigan Commonwealth Federation. The name was patterned after the socialistic Canadian Commonwealth Federation and it reflected growing disenchantment with the Roosevelt government and labor's ties to the Democratic Party.[12] The MCF was bitterly attacked by the UAW leadership but the local union leaders who dominated the MCF were quite timid in their opposition to CIO-Democratic Party politics. They ran a few candidates that year, being careful not to oppose Roosevelt and other choice Democrats endorsed by the unions. Although they faded fairly quickly from the scene, the unionists who formed MCF reflected a deep-rooted desire for an independent labor movement, a desire that was later to surface in the unsuccessful campaign of UAW Vice-President Richard Frankensteen for mayor of Detroit.[13]

Major strikes began to appear with greater frequency in 1944. In February 6,500 workers at Chevrolet Gear and Axle (UAW local 235, Detroit) and 5,600 workers at the Ford Highland Park plant (local 400) incurred the denunciations of UAW leaders for taking part in wildcat strikes. In March a mass meeting of members of the Aircraft Unit of the Ford Rouge local 600 proposed to call a city-wide conference to begin a movement to rescind the no-strike pledge. (The Aircraft Unit consisted of about 10,000 workers on Pratt-Whitney aircraft engines, part of the near-100,000-member local 600. The president of the unit in 1944 was Larry Yost, who became one of the leaders of the Rank and File Caucus.) Later the same month the executive board of local 212 voted for a special convention to rescind the no-strike pledge. Other

locals passed similar resolutions.[14]

Wildcat strikes at the Ford Rouge plant in March led to a call for disciplinary action against the strikers by R. J. Thomas, directed against local 600. Over 100 workers were disciplined by the Ford Motor Company for strike action.[15]

In May, a strike at the Chrysler Highland Park plant, local 400, resulted in the International Union removing the local union officers and placing an administrator over the local. When the three-month statutory limit on such suspensions of local union officers was up, the local membership overwhelmingly re-elected the offending officers. President of the local was William Jenkins, a socialist who also became a leader of the Rank and File Caucus.[16]

During the summer of 1944, Allied victory in the war against Germany and Japan seemed only a matter of time. The beginning of cutbacks in war production were made, to add to the bitterness and insecurity of workers in the war plants. In this period, contacts were being established to form the Rank and File Caucus in preparation for the coming UAW convention. The leaders and organizers of the Rank and File Caucus were local union officers. Some of the initiators had been associated with the Workers Party, but most had been independent militants.

The convention of the Michigan CIO in July provided the means for opponents of the no-strike pledge to make contact and to plan. The convention itself was controlled by the CIO leadership. Forewarned by their defeat on the no-strike pledge the year before, the leaders came prepared. "A massive array of CIO and UAW top officers poured it on the Michigan delegates hour after hour in denunciation of any attempt to abrogate the no-strike pledge. They were joined by army and navy brass hats, clergymen and especially selected Purple Heart war veterans."[17] About two thirds of the delegates voted to sustain the pledge.[18] However, the groundwork was laid for the coming UAW convention. A Rank and File Caucus was established with a three-point program:

1. Rescind the no-strike pledge.
2. For independent political action.
3. Remove the brass-hats from the international leadership and substitute for them officers who represent the rank and file.

> While all caucus members paid lip service to the labor party, there was serious, if undercover, opposition to the MCF and an independent Labor Party at caucus meetings. Chief center of the opposition was the Buick Local 599, for which the spokesman was Ed Geiger, educational director of the local. Local 599 was supported in their stand by some delegates from the Olds local in Lansing.[19]

There was only one plank in the program that all caucus members supported, the no-strike pledge. Beyond that there were differences between socialist, anti-war unionists and those who had ties to the Democratic Party and the Addes or Reuther caucuses in the UAW.[19]

Working to organize a caucus from the Detroit area were: John Zupan, a committeeman from the Willow Run Bomber local 50, a dedicated socialist who had come to the Detroit area from the coal regions of Pennsylvania where he had worked in a zinc smelter. He had considerable intellectual abilities and a concern for political theory and analysis. These are traits that can be often found in workers, although they are rarely given the opportunity to flourish.

Larry Yost was the chairman of the Aircraft Unit at the Ford Rouge plant who had become prominent as a result of major wildcats in his unit. He was a rare individual who had an instinctive affinity for sensing what working people were willing or anxious to do, and it made him a natural mass leader. He had been a moderate socialist, more or less affiliated with the Socialist Party, but he had no great depth of principle or belief and after the war years he became a strong Reuther supporter and bitter anti-Communist. He later drifted off into middle class occupations.

William Jenkins was president of Chrysler Highland Park local 490. He was an old-time SPer with strong anti-war beliefs. He had been something of a Reuther supporter before the no-strike pledge fight and returned to the Reuther camp after it was over. His militancy was principled and consistent.

From the Flint area, the following people played key roles in organizing the caucus:

F. R. "Jack" Palmer, who was head of the Flint MCF and on the educational committee of Chevrolet local 659, and a principled and dedicated socialist.

Bert Boone, President of Chevrolet local 659 and a

former Wobbly (member of the Industrial Workers of the World), part of a strong and interesting core of Wobblies and socialists who functioned for many years in the Chevy local.

John McGill, a more traditional union militant, a former president of Buick local 599.

A steering committee was set up in Grand Rapids at the State CIO convention with McGill as chairman and Boone as secretary. Also on the committee were Yost, Bill Jenkins and Jack Carter of AC Spark Plug (a GM division) in Flint. Looking at these names, it strikes me that, at least in part, they reflect the desire of radicals to involve non-radicals more closely in the activity of the caucus and also to broaden the appeal of the caucus by putting forward the most prominent individuals available and those least connected publicly with left political groups.[20]

At the end of July, Bill Jenkins and his entire slate were restored to office in Chrysler local 490. In August another strike at the plants of Chevrolet Gear and Axle led to the suspension of the local officers and the appointment of an administrator over the local. The plants were shut down again in less than a month, and Reuther and the administrator insisted on the ending of the strike without negotiating any of the union demands.[21] Here, too, the local officers were overwhelmingly returned to office as soon as the 60-day suspension was over.[22]

Clear indications of growing anti-no-strike pledge sentiment were emerging from the elections of delegates to the UAW convention at the end of the summer. One such shift was reported from the Ford Highland Park local:

> So unpopular is the pledge today in Highland Park that all the opportunist office seekers of Local 400 are pushing each other over in their haste to jump on the bandwagon and scrap the pledge, including several who only one month ago were its firm upholders, like the Johnson brothers, who refused to run on a slate against the pledge, and William Oliver, recording secretary, who voted at the state CIO convention to maintain the pledge, but is elected one month later, pledged to the membership to fight against it.[23]

This may be one of the sources of the seemingly

contradictory behavior of the delegates at the 1944 convention, the contradiction between long-established caucus loyalties and the pressure of rank and file workers forcing some of the delegates to vote against caucus policy.

The UAW convention opened on Monday, September 11, 1944. It was evident in advance that the no-strike pledge would be the crucial question. One sign of this was the adoption of Convention Rule 11, which provided that all committee reports be restricted to minority and majority "with the exception of the No-Strike Pledge issue."[24] The discussion of the pledge began on the morning of the third day with the presentation of three resolutions to the convention.

The majority resolution was read by Norman Matthews of the Packard Local, chairman of the Resolutions Committee. It was supported by committee members Nat Ganley, Shelton Tappes, Ben Ambroch and William Dieter. It read:

> WHEREAS: On December 7, 1941, our country was attacked, and ten days later organized labor, by its own motion and without a single request from the President of the United States, gave him a committment that for the duration of this war organized labor would not engage in strikes. We asked for no partisan advantages for ourselves as the price of our patriotism. We needed* so-called "tripartite" agreement as a condition for defending our country from attack, and,
>
> WHEREAS: Labor gave this committment because we realized that we could not protect our earnings and conditions in the shop and remain free labor without protecting our nation from the Axis threat to dominate the world and,
>
> WHEREAS: Because of our No Strike Pledge, the President of our country was able to state in his Labor Day message: "American workers can observe this Labor Day in the proud knowledge that in the battle of production their free labor is triumphing over slave labor. It was their determination to safeguard liberty and to preserve their

*There seems to be a typographical error at this point, with the word "no" missing.

American heritage for coming generations that made possible the greatest production achievement in the world's history" and,

WHEREAS: Our great International Union has stood steadfast for war victory despite provocation caused by the treasonable actions of many of our managements who took advantage of our no strike commitment and, who are responsible for most of our "wild cat" strikes, and,

WHEREAS: President Phil Murray of the CIO has made it clear that: "The No Strike commitment has not thwarted the development or growth of the organized labor movement of the United States" and,

WHEREAS: The reactionary forces behind Dewey and Bricker would like nothing better than the rescinding of the No Strike Pledge by the largest war workers union in America during this final phase of the crucial presidential election and,

WHEREAS: Our No Strike Pledge strengthens the political bargaining power of the organized labor movement for the duration of the war, which we must have to win a proper wage policy and proper War Labor Board policies, and,

WHEREAS: Our soldiers, sailors and marines engaged in an amazing offensive on all fronts call upon their brothers on the production front to keep them supplied with fighting weapons for the final push to victory, and,

WHEREAS: In his September 4th message of thanks to the war workers of this country, General Eisenhower said, "Now as never before there must be no shortage of tanks, trucks, ammunition or fuel. The possibility of such a failure on your part does not enter into my calculation" and,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That for the duration of the war the UAW-CIO reaffirms its No Strike Pledge to the Commander-in-Chief of our armed forces and to our country.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: This Convention remembers the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. That attack will be

answered when we force the unconditional surrender of Japan after the defeat of Germany. Only then will the war be over. Our No Strike Pledge continued for the duration of the war, in all plants, will guarantee an uninterrupted flow of war materials to our armed forces in the Pacific. Any other course would harm our country, our union and the workers we represent. New conditions may affect our No Strike Pledge after the defeat of Germany.

Hence immediately upon the termination of the war against Germany, the International Executive Board shall, together with the National Board of the CIO, and after consultation with the other boards of organized labor in the United States who gave the pledge, review and decide a further policy on the No Strike Pledge for the balance of the war to drive Japan to unconditional surrender.[25]

Victor Reuther, secretary of the Resolutions Committee, read the minority resolution, joined by committee members H. A. Moon and Harold Johnson.

WHEREAS: The membership of the UAW-CIO in keeping with our unswerving loyalty to our nation and our fighting men, has from the inception of the Nazi-Fascist attack on freedom given unselfish and unstinting support to the war effort of our country and its allies, and,

WHEREAS: Our union was the first to propose all-out conversion of manufacturing facilities to war production. With the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, we gave a pledge to maintain continuous production and to withhold, for the duration of the war, our right to strike. In plants which produce billions of dollars worth of war material annually, our membership has worked hard and continuously to provide our fighting men with the most effective equipment in immense quantities at the earliest possible date and,

WHEREAS: As a result of the efforts of American labor, of which our membership is a major part, our American army is today the best equipped army on the face of the earth. The death blow now being rained on the armies of Hitler and Japan by our armed forces is in part the result of our membership on our production front. Not only have we supplied our own army with the physical

materials of victory, but we have helped equip and make possible the brilliant triumphs scored by the armies of Britain, Russia and other nations arrayed against Hitlerism. The soldiers of all nations, GIs and generals, are universal in their praise of the production efforts of American labor, and,

WHEREAS: The war effort of our membership has not been limited to production alone. Our members have given of their blood to succor our wounded; we have contributed generously to Red Cross and other war relief agencies; we have bought War Bonds to our utmost limit; our members by the thousands have served voluntarily in civilian defense and other war-time domestic activities. We have almost 300,000 of our members serving in the armed forces. Daily the War and Navy Departments announce the names of UAW-CIO members who have been maimed or killed in battle, men of labor who have died for their country. On the basis of this record, this convention of the UAW-CIO rejects as viciously unfair falsehoods the concerted propaganda of selfish interest [sic] which seek to belittle and besmirch our contribution to the war effort. We hurl these lies back into their teeth. Our war record is complete and not subject to challenge and,

WHEREAS: Unlike the vested interest of big business, we have not indulged in war profiteering; we have not sought to exploit the nation's struggle for partisan gains or aggrandisement. Unlike the owners of industry we did not demand nor have we received guarantees of substantial profits, salaries, and postwar tax rebates. The measure of our contribution to the war effort has not been gauged by monetary rewards. On the contrary we have continued to labor diligently and unceasingly despite the deterioration of our wage and living standards, and,

WHEREAS: The UAW-CIO views the war against Nazism and fascism as a part of Labor's continuous struggle for security. We reject any contention that there is any conflict between the war effort and the recognition of labor's legitimate demands for economic justice.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That this Convention reaffirm its no strike pledge for the duration of the war. We shall do everything in our

power to maintain continuous top production and to bring to a speedy and successful termination of the war against all axis nations.

2. While re-newing our no strike pledge, we declare it to be our position that the successful maintenance of continuous production is a responsibility of management and the government as well as of labor. Desirous as labor is to maintain continuous production, this cannot be attained as long as management continues to provoke stoppages by taking advantage of the no strike pledge; nor can continued production be assured until the government, through the War Labor Board and other appropriate agencies, measure up to their responsibility to provide speedy and satisfactory adjustment of labor's grievances, and to protect the labor movement against management efforts to take advantage of the no strike pledge to weaken the labor movement and undermine its standards. Continuous production requires fulfillment of a tripartite responsibility. We demand that management and the government measure up to theirs. Slogans and lip-service will not insure continuous production; only genuine collective bargaining and fair-play can achieve that end.

3. The UAW-CIO, while ready and anxious to make every sacrifice for our nation, is unwilling to sacrifice our union for the profits of the owners of industry. In view of announced plans of the War and Navy departments to cut war production from 40 to 60% immediately after the defeat of Germany, this convention sets forth the following to be its policy between the period after the defeat of Germany and the end of the war against Japan.

(a) The no strike pledge will remain in effect in those plants wholly or partially engaged in war production.

(b) In those plants reconverted to the exclusive and sole manufacture of civilian production the pledge of labor not to strike shall not be binding and the International Executive Board is empowered in accordance with the provisions of our constitution to authorize strike action where, in the interest of safeguarding and extending the rights of labor, such action is required.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED: That this convention

support the positions of Philip Murray and R. J. Thomas who condemn those individuals inside or outside the labor movement who propose to extend indefinitely labor's war time no strike pledge in time of peace.[26]

Ben Garrison, of the Ford Highland Park local 400, introduced what was called the Super-Minority Report.

WHEREAS: On April 7 and 8, 1942, delegates representing the organized workers in the state of Michigan assembled in a study conference in Detroit, Michigan and,

WHEREAS: A ten-point "Victory through equality of sacrifice" program was agreed upon embodying the following:

1. Corporation profits limited to 3%.
2. Income of individuals or family not to exceed $25,000 annually.
3. Rigid price control to prevent inflation.
4. A fair and just rationing program.
5. Wage increases commensurate with increases in cost of living.
6. Dependents of our fighting men be granted a living wage.
7. A moratorium be declared on all debts during the period of reconversion.
8. A Labor Production Division be created within W. P. B.
9. Representatives of Labor, Government, Agriculture and Industry to constitute a committee in discussions on winning the peace.
10. On the assurance that the above will become law, the members of the UAW-CIO would take all time over 40 hours per week in the form of non-negotiable War Bonds and,

WHEREAS: In consideration of promises made that the foregoing would be enacted as the law of the land, labor would agree to substitute conciliation, arbitration and mediation of disputes through the medium of a War Labor Board, in the place of Labor's most precious right, the right to strike and,

WHEREAS: Because the 10-point program was by-passed

by both industry and government after Labor made its commitment, labor has been forced to take a retreating position by both the public and our membership. On the one hand, the public has been propagandized by an anti-union press and on the other hand, an anti-union force within industry is continuously provoking wildcat strike action in an organized endeavor to smash the union movement and,

WHEREAS: In the face of this, Labor has patriotically continued to sacrifice while the moneyed interests and large corporations have drawn tremendous surpluses and instituted a policy of abrogation of collective bargaining, which if allowed to continue will surely mean the disintegration of all labor unions as has been the fate of the labor movement in Germany, Italy and other fascist countries.

WHEREAS: The general membership of our International Union has never been given an opportunity to express their opinion through a referendum vote on this all important question.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That we assembled in this great convention rescind our no strike pledge and further we,

RESOLVED: That a referendum vote of the membership be conducted by the International Executive Board 60 days after adjournment of this Convention to either uphold or reject the action of this Convention and be it finally

RESOLVED: That the Education Department be instructed to immediately institute an educational campaign both by press and radio to acquaint our membership and the general public with the position taken by this Convention.[27]

All the self-serving "whereases" in the resolutions proved unimportant in the vigorous debate that followed. The exaggerated patriotism was punctured by the delegation from Briggs local 212, which whipped out small American flags, waving them wildly in derision at the remarks in defense of the pledge by local 600's President Grant.

Some of the local leaders who entered the debate on the

side of rescinding the pledge were Paul Silver of local 351, and Jess Ferrazza of Briggs local 212 (Emil Mazey was serving in the armed forces at this time). Only one member of the International Executive Board, Swanson from the Buick local in Flint, supported the super-minority report. The top leadership of the union was overwhelmingly in favor of the majority report.

The debate took all of Wednesday and ended with a roll call vote on the super-minority resolution. It was defeated by a vote of 6,617.845 to 3,750.855.[28]

That evening the various caucuses met to rouse their followers and to plan strategy. The Rank and File Caucus meetings were poorly attended all through the convention, a relative handful finding their way there compared to the packed halls of the Addes-CP and Reuther caucuses. After the defeat in the first vote, the consensus in informal discussion was that the Rank and File Caucus should support the lesser of the two remaining evils, the Reuther resolution which called for a minimal retreat from the no-strike pledge. However, when strategy was discussed in the steering committee, Max Shachtman, National Secretary of the Workers Party, proposed that the caucus stand firm and call for the defeat of both the minority and majority resolutions. As an observer present on the scene, I was intrigued by the instantaneous acceptance of the proposal. Such a departure from conventional tactical wisdom did not even seem to require any debate. The rest of the night was spent getting a leaflet printed which said, simply, "Vote No on Minority and Majority Reports. Rank and File Caucus." A copy was placed on each delegate's seat before the convention opened on Thursday morning.

The vote on the minority resolution was so overwhelming that there was not even a request for a roll call vote. It was Reuther's low point in the history of the UAW. The more militant rhetoric of the minority resolution could not conceal the fact that it differed from the majority resolution in the most trivial way. It was simply brushed aside by the delegates, gaining support from only hard core Reuther supporters.

The vote on the majority report, however, changed the entire complexion of the convention. On a roll call vote, it

was defeated by a vote of 5,232.853 to 4,988.892.[29]

On the platform there was total dismay. With honored guests and dignitaries from the government and from the CIO present, the leadership had been unable to deliver its own membership. What was worse, the UAW no longer had a no-strike pledge. The union had been taken by surprise.

It is impossible, at this late date, to do more than guess at why the delegates voted the way they did. I believe that the majority wanted to rescind the no-strike pledge (or were obligated to their local membership to vote that way). However, caucus loyalties prevented many of them from voting for the super-minority report, so they discharged their responsibilities by voting down the majority report.

The vote was followed by a period of intense maneuvering. The majority and minority of the Resolutions Committee joined to propose that the convention vote separately on two propositions, one, on a simple motion to reaffirm or rescind the pledge, and, two, a motion on whether to hold a membership referendum on that subject. Garrison refused to accept the proposal of a new majority on the committee and proposed instead that the convention reaffirm the pledge for the duration of the war and hold a membership referendum within 90 days. The ability of the Rank and File Caucus to make itself felt in the votes that followed was probably seriously diminished by Garrison's concession of retention of the pledge pending the referendum.

After considerable debate, Garrison's motion to reaffirm the no-strike pledge pending a referendum was defeated and the majority's motion to reaffirm the pledge was carried. At this point, the Addes-CP majority of the resolutions committee opposed holding a referendum, and Victor Reuther and Johnson supported Garrison's motion, which was carried in a roll call vote. The minority resolution was:

> RESOLVED: That this convention authorize a referendum vote of the entire membership commencing 90 days after the adjournment of this convention; that a committee of nine be appointed by the convention to conduct a referendum vote through the United States mails. This committee shall be selected by the convention Resolutions Committee on the basis of three members

representing each point of view.

FINALLY RESOLVED: That, while we recognize the democratic rights of the International Officers and International Representatives to express themselves on this question, it shall be made mandatory that none of the International Officers or International Representatives shall use Union funds, the International Newspaper, the International Education Department, or any other agency of the Union in propagandizing their position on this issue.[30]

One of the concerns of the leadership in the timing of the referendum was that it not embarrass President Roosevelt in his campaign for reelection. In any case, the referendum was delayed beyond the convention mandate and was not held until January and February of 1945. In a meeting of the International Executive Board following the convention, R. J. Thomas expressed his concerns about the convention and how the union's leaders would conduct themselves in the referendum.

President Thomas commented in general on the fervor and attitude of the delegates attending the convention in Grand Rapids. In his opinion both groups were equally responsible for the unrest which existed at the convention. He feared for the future welfare of the organization. When considering the present status of our country, and the provocations of management all over the country, it was easy to comprehend the reason for the worker's almost open animosity towards all officers, Board Members and general staff at the Convention. He cautioned the Board against playing "politics" with such situations.[31]

The people who had organized the Rank and File Caucus were feeling quite confident at the end of the UAW convention. They had accomplished more than anyone had expected. They chose a new steering committee which reflected the fact that their contacts had extended far beyond the borders of Michigan. Chairman of the committee was Larry Yost, a popular figure, but not one able to do consistent organizing. Secretary of the committee was Art Hughes, President of the Dodge Truck local 140, a traditional unionist

of a type whose support would be needed for a successful campaign on the referendum. Filling out the steering committee were Max Weinrib of Chicago local 719, Bob Burckhardt of Toledo local 12, and James Barricks of Buffalo local 501.

A decision was made to publish a paper in the campaign against the no-strike pledge. The editorial committee consisted of Johnny Zupan of Willow Run local 50 as editor, and Larry Yost and Art Hughes as the Detroit members of the steering committee. Altogether, three issues of a four-page tabloid called the *Rank and Filer* were published, in January and February 1945 and a final issue after the referendum was over, in April.

A nine-point program, which had been adopted by the caucus at the convention, appeared in each issue:

1. Rescind the no-strike pledge.
2. Break the WLB by removing UAW members from regional and national War Labor Boards.
3. Smash the Little Steel Formula by hitching wages to the rising cost of living.
4. Begin today to build for an independent labor party tomorrow.
5. Wage Policy and Reconversion:
   A. An industry-wide wage policy guaranteeing equal pay for equal work throughout the nation.
   B. Fight general unemployment by instituting a thirty-hour week at a livable wage.
   C. Fight seasonal unemployment with a guaranteed annual wage.
   D. Adequate pay for all workers, to be based on seniority.
   E. Reduction of age limits on Social Security retirement.
6. Elections for all national union department heads, such as Ford, GM, Chrysler, etc.
7. Establishment of a national UAW daily paper.
8. Fifty per cent of all international union assessments to be retained by the local unions.
9. Elect officers who support the program of the workers in the shops.[32]

The range of the program clearly indicates the intention of the Rank and File Caucus to function beyond the no-strike pledge referendum as a major contender for power in the UAW.[33] In this they were totally unsuccessful. The paper did not go beyond its third issue and the caucus was not able to survive the end of the war in 1945 and the reconversion period. Most of the caucus supporters were caught up in the drive for power by Walter Reuther, on one side or the other (although most became Reuther supporters) and the caucus simply faded way.

The rest of 1944 was spent by the referendum committee and the International Executive Board maneuvering over the details of the referendum. Meanwhile strikes were continuing to mount. In February of 1945 there were major strikes at Briggs and Dodge.[34] The Dodge strike extended into March and spread to other Chrysler plants.[35] It was effective enough to force the WLB, for the first time, to negotiate grievances while the workers were still out on strike.

The balloting in the referendum took place in February. Members received a double postcard, the ballot part of which was returnable, postage free, to the International office in Detroit. The International Executive Board approved the following wording:

> Do you favor the action of the Ninth Convention of the UAW-CIO, which reads as follows:
>
> "Resolved that this Convention reaffirm for the duration of the war the No Strike Pledge to the Commander-in-Chief of our Armed Forces and our country."
>
> Yes _____ No_____
>
> (Mail this Ballot not later than February 17, 1945)[36]

Both in its reference to the convention's action and to "the Commander-in-Chief of our Armed Forces" the wording of the ballot was not neutral. (All through the war — and since — there was a tendency to invest in the phrase, Commander-in-Chief, a meaning far beyond the constitutional provision that the military forces of the United States be subject to the *civilian* control of the President.)

At the time, I wrote of the irregularities in the balloting, including the report that in Lansing, Mich., ballots went to management people at the Olds and Reo plants. The Olds management returned the ballots; the Reo management did not. "Auto workers all over the country are reporting cases in which two to five ballots are received by a single person, often a person who has not been a member of the union for a year or more. . . . The unfairness of the vote is made even worse by the wording of the ballot. . . . Since the vote is being conducted in the manner of a plebiscite, it would indeed be surprising if the sentiment of the majority of the auto workers made itself felt."[37]

Looking back on the election, it is my belief that, although irregularities did, in fact, take place, they were not of a kind which would indicate major fraud. In spite of the biased wording of the ballot, the election, supervised by a committee that had three members, one-third, from the anti-pledge point of view, reflected with reasonable accuracy the views of those members who voted. I find it hard to believe that the ballot wording would have deceived or swayed more than a tiny handful of UAW members. The debate over the referendum was loud and long. It took place on the shop floor, in the local unions and in the daily papers. And, while the overwhelming weight of propaganda from the press and from the government and other sources was for retention of the pledge, auto workers were not deceived over what they were voting on.

There were 1,036,254 members eligible to vote, plus 150,000 in the armed forces. This was the average membership during the June-September period, 1944.[38] The yes vote, for reaffirming the no-strike pledge, was 178,824; the no vote, 97,620.[39] Something over a quarter of a million members had cast valid ballots.

The heaviest vote for rescinding the no-strike pledge came from Regions 1 and 1-A (the Detroit metropolitan area), 1-C (the Flint-Lansing area), and 7 (Canada, where, because the government had not cooperated in maintaining union membership, the no-strike pledge had always been shaky). These regions were followed by Region 1-B, a southern Michigan tier of counties which included Pontiac, Jackson, Battle Creek, Kalamazoo, and Benton Harbor. The

TABLE 13. Regional breakdown of UAW membership.[40]

UAW-CIO Region	Average Membership June-Sept., 1944
1	195,559
1-A	145,101
1-B	80,074
1-C	58,236
1-D	46,063
2	20,660
2-A	59,455
2-B	47,069
3	74,751
4	81,740
5	38,307
6	25,217
7	26,007
8	21,685
9	53,159
9-A	63,173
	1,036,254
Armed forces:	150,000

TABLE 14. Military Ballots.[40]

YES
10,575 — 93.1%
NO
781 — 6.9%
Total mailed: 72,444
Total voted: 11,356
% participated: 15.8%

TABLE 15. No-Strike Pledge referendum vote by regions.[40]

YES VOTES			NO VOTES		
Region	No. Votes	Per Cent	Region	No. Votes	Per Cent
1	26,580	54%	1	22,732	46%
1-A	26,169	54.5%	1-A	23,512	45.5%
1-B	11,087	63.9%	1-B	6,402	36.1%
1-C	9,299	56.6%	1-C	7,139	43.4%
1-D	8,683	74.3%	1-D	2,998	25.6%
2	3,678	74.2%	2	1,279	25.8%
2-A	8,787	74.6%	2-A	2,996	25.4%
2-B	6,750	71.8%	2-B	2,652	28.2%
3	13,732	78.6%	3	3,730	21.4%
4	18,691	71.4%	4	7,466	28.6%
5	6,351	72.3%	5	2,430	27.7%
6	3,306	87.4%	6	476	12.6%
7	4,792	54.2%	7	4,040	45.8%
8	4,178	83.8%	8	810	16.2%
9	6,071	71%	9	2,478	29.3%
9-A	8,599	72.6%	9-A	3,240	27.4% [sic]
Totals:	178,824			97,620	

heaviest vote for maintaining the pledge came from Regions 6 (California and Utah) and 8 (the southeastern United States).

The *Rank and Filer* headlined the vote: "35% AGAINST STRIKE PLEDGE."[41] It went on to comment,

> A most significant feature of the vote which aided the bureaucrats tremendously was the surprising number of auto and aircraft workers who did not vote. To understand why the vote was so small is to understand why the pledge was upheld.
>
> Thousands upon thousands of UAW members who are opposed to the no-strike pledge did not cast any ballots in the referendum. Where, for example, were the thousands of Chrysler workers in Detroit who showed what they thought of the no-strike pledge by walking out of their plants in protest against a company speed-up? Where were the Briggs workers, the Ford workers who have not hesitated in the past to use the strike weapon to protect their rights?
>
> Only one answer can be given: The majority of UAW members did not think that rescinding the no-strike pledge would result in any considerable change in the policies of the union leadership or in the status of the union.[41]

In any case, the situation in March 1945 was as follows: A majority of the auto workers who voted, voted to retain the no-strike pledge while the country was at war. However, the overwhelming majority of the auto workers did not bother to vote. At the same time, in the period that the vote was taking place, the winter and spring of 1944 and 1945, a majority of the auto workers went out on wildcat strikes. "*Business Week* noted that the votes were being counted when there were more workers on strike in Detroit than at any time since the start of the war."[42] And Art Preis also notes that, "When the war came to a close on August 14, 1945, the American workers had chalked up more strikes and strikers during the period from December 7, 1941, to the day of Japanese surrender three years and eight months later, than in any similar period of time in American labor history."[42]

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that in 1944, in the industries manufacturing automobiles and automobile equipment, there were 388,763 workers involved in strikes and these made up 50.5% of the labor force.[43] In 1945 the

corresponding figures were 473,700 workers, making up 75.9% of the labor force.[44] The 1945 figures obviously include the half of the year which followed the end of the war, when strikes increased in number. None of these figures include the aircraft industry and so do not coincide with membership in the UAW. However, as was indicated earlier, these figures are on the conservative side in that they do not include many in-plant walkouts and sit-ins.

In any case, the contradiction remains whether one views the UAW as a whole or takes a narrower slice of industry such as workers in the automobile industry, or, even, auto workers in the Detroit metropolitan area; a majority of workers went out on strike in a period when a referendum was indicating close to two-to-one opposition to wartime strikes.

It is not victory or defeat but this contradiction that culminates the wartime struggle over the no-strike pledge in the UAW.

7

CONCLUSIONS

It is rare for history to provide so clear-cut and well-documented a contradiction. On the one hand, a majority of auto workers voted to sustain the no-strike pledge. On the other hand, a majority of auto workers went out on wildcat strikes.

It should be a fruitful source of analysis and understanding. But traditional social science cannot easily deal with this kind of contradiction. The facts strike a powerful blow against sociological surveys and academic views of consciousness. The UAW referendum was a pretty good version of a sociological survey — a simple statement of belief on a clearly stated subject. And yet, even while the survey was being made, the events belied the results of the survey. There had been some understanding that opinion surveys are static and their results cannot be projected too easily into the future. T. Lupton, for example, noted:

> The interview is often useful as a means to ascertain attitudes, opinions, and beliefs, but it is not possible to proceed logically from statements about attitudes to descriptions of actual or probable behaviour. Attitudes expressed in an interview may not affect the choice made. Many choices involve a clash between attitudes stated with equal conviction in the situation of the interview.[1]

But here is a situation in which they do not even have validity in the present and the recent past. Part of the contradiction is illuminated by the following:

> We tackled Jimmy on this apparent conflict of views — asking him why it was that he could support an Act which

intended to curb the use of union power while, in his own work situation, he advocated the greater use of that power. He then made it clear that he didn't think *all* strikes were a bad thing "because some do have a good foundation, you know the workers have got reason to strike — but some I believe are Communist inspired and so if the Act can stop that sort of strike then I'm all in favour of it." It becomes clear that it is not working-class action that is being rejected but working-class action as it is projected by the mass media. Not *militancy* but "mindless militancy." Jimmy and his mates are *told* that strikes are bad, that workers are led by Communists and they believe it. To an extent, that is. Certainly they believe it to the point of arguing it in a pub or of answering a public opinion pollster. But when it comes to daily activity at work they *know* that strikes can be justified. Maybe they won't go on strike but they won't decide *not* to strike because "strikes are bad for the country" or because "strikes are the results of agitators." Their decision to strike, or not, will be geared to their own particular situation. It is this tension between generally propagated abstract ideas and practical necessity which explains why — even at a time when wider and wider sections of the workforce were involved in strike action — public opinion polls continued to find so many workers who considered strikes "a bad thing."[2]

One of the problems of academic social science is the difficulty it has in dealing with any kind of contradiction. Contradiction is viewed as a problem to be straightened out, to be interpreted away. On the other hand, a dialectical view of reality not only assumes contradiction as normal and natural, it views contradiction as the source of all development, change, and movement. It makes contradiction central to its concerns.

> The one major investigation into the effect of "affluence" upon the British working class, for example, begins with the assumption that the sort of understanding which workers have of their situation can be analysed in terms of its overarching *consistency*. Given this assumption "models of consciousness" can be arrived at in which one set of ideas are seen to relate in a formal logical manner to others. The problem with this view of things is that it fails

> to root "consciousness" in the structure of the real world where experience is more characterised by *contradiction* than consistency.[3]

One question that is raised by the no-strike pledge referendum is: who are the militants? It has long been the received wisdom of the left (and the right, as well) that the more militant workers are also more "conscious" (whatever that word means) and are therefore also the more active in union affairs. That is, militancy is defined as some combination of a radical point of view on particular questions and activism in the union. It is not too distant from the point of view of many leftists that abstention from the political process is a sign of backwardness. People who do not vote for Republicans or Democrats and yet cannot be enticed to vote for Marxist candidates are perceived as needing education. To put it crudely, conscious militancy is to some degree related to participation in the parliamentary system. In the UAW referendum many workers, a substantial minority, voted to rescind the no-strike pledge. It seems reasonable to conclude, however, that the workers who did not vote at all exhibited a greater degree of militancy than those who did. First, of course, there is the fact that acting in a militant way (striking) in the face of considerable sanctions demands more dedication and courage than simply expressing a point of view (especially in a secret ballot). But there is a more important element involved than that. It is not a matter of standing in judgment on workers, measuring their militancy on a scale of 10, or any similar nonsense. It is a matter of finding out why workers behave the way they do and what that indicates for the future. And in that context it is important to understand the significance of abstention from the vote.

To the many thousands of auto workers who wildcatted but did not vote in the referendum, the referendum did not matter. At least it did not matter enough to exert a very minimum effort. But to say that it did not matter is quite ambiguous. I believe it is valid to surmise that it did not matter because to most workers the union structure (like the institutional structure of society generally) is an alien reality. Union leaders are seen as "politicians." Union leaders, politicians, businessmen, intellectuals, are seen as "them," as opposed to

"us." The kind of satisfactions workers can expect to receive from "them" tends to be marginal. Things may get a little better or a little worse, but the fundamental reality of life at work is not likely to change.

The basic argument against this view is that the abstention of voters contributes to the powerlessness of those voters. This view, however, is both reformist and false.[4] It is reformist because it argues that people should take seriously minor adjustments in the system. In the case in point, the adjustment involves the difference between contracts that have no-strike pledges and a union leadership that is not likely to authorize many strikes and a more sweeping pledge that covers all exceptions. In one sense, of course, everything matters, every improvement, no matter how slight. But this sustains the idea that *fundamental* changes are simply an accumulation of *trivial* ones, and that all expenditures of energy are equally valid.

The view is false, both in unions and in the society generally, that power resides with voters in proportion to numbers of votes. It is interesting to note in passing that the rejection of the parliamentary process in the United States on a significant scale dates from the turn of the present century. After a quarter of a century of extraordinarily violent and revolutionary struggles on the part of workers, farmers, and others, struggles which were beaten down by military force, and after two successive defeats of William Jennings Bryan for the presidency, running on a populist program, there was a significant and continuing drop in the proportion of eligible Americans who took part in the electoral process. This reflects, it seems to me, a cynical but accurate estimate of the value of the electoral process to workers and poor people generally. It is inherently critical of this society (or, more narrowly, the unions). It is more revolutionary (actual or potential) than the urging of workers to get out and vote, no matter how valid the cause. *Objectively*, however they interpret their actions in their own minds, workers who reject the institutional framework and take action outside of that framework are expressing a revolutionary potential. To put the matter negatively, workers do not have sufficient loyalty to the institutions of this society (including "their" institutions) to prevent them from abandoning those institutions in

a revolutionary situation.

The vote in the UAW referendum indicates a contradiction between activism and activity, but it is a contradiction that is imposed from the outside and is not inherent in working class activity. It is only a rigid and artificial definition of activism that produces the contradiction.

However, at least among those who voted to retain the no-strike pledge, there was a real contradiction between a verbalized belief and activity. There were many, many workers in the UAW who thought the no-strike pledge a necessary thing and who, nevertheless, went on strike. It is in this area that the most significant conclusions can be drawn.

The first conclusion is that belief does not govern activity. Marx and Engels noted:

> The question is not what this or that proletarian, or even the whole of the proletariat at the moment *considers* as its aim. The question is *what the proletariat is*, and what, consequent on that *being*, it will be compelled to do. Its aim and historical action is irrevocably and obviously demonstrated in its own life situation as well as in the whole organization of bourgeois society today.[5]

There is a contradiction between the workers' being and the workers' consciousness. It would be quite remarkable if this were not so in a capitalist society.[6] If that was where the matter rested, with the control by the ruling class of all the significant means of education and communication, then this whole discussion would be meaningless because it wouldn't matter in the slightest what workers thought. But the domination over the production of ideas is never enough for those who rule, because the reality of workers' lives is in contradiction to the ideas that dominate the society. It is the contradiction between being and consciousness which produces change. The hostile and alienating nature of work in this society (in addition to all the institutions inside and outside the factory designed to sustain the discipline of work) forces workers to resist their daily reality, individually and collectively. The response to that resistance tends to expose the mythology of freedom and equality and continually transforms the consciousness of workers. This is especially true of workers who have not yet been socialized into the accepted

and institutionalized forms of resistance, such as the union grievance procedure, government boards and so on. It is likely that those sections of the working class who were relatively new to the factories, such as the southerners and women, were least likely to accept the discipline of factory work and the discipline of the union. This is borne out by the complaints of spokesmen for the military and spokesmen for the union.

Workers during World War II were generally aware of the class nature of the American government, its favored treatment of corporations, its oppression of workers through a myriad of institutions — price controls, wage controls, restrictions on job transfers, the draft, housing priorities, etc. (To say that they were aware does not mean that they were able to express this awareness in these abstract, intellectual terms.) When they went on strike and when they saw others such as the miners and the MESA members go on strike, they could not help but feel the terrible pressure of management, union, government and press, all of which denounced them as unpatriotic, subversive, red, and so on. Going on strike made it necessary to modify their views on other things.[7] Being workers made it necessary for them to go on strike.

The second conclusion is that activity modifies belief. What exists, in fact, is a continually developing contradiction between being and consciousness. They act upon each other. It would be nonsense to say that consciousness has no effect on activity, if only to delay or restrain activity. But activity continually emerges to assert itself as the overriding element in that combination. That this is borne out by the way that auto workers behaved during World War II does not make it new. Marx and Engels were aware of it a century earlier:

> Both for the production on a mass scale of this communist consciousness, and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a mass scale is necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a *revolution*; this revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the *ruling* class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class *overthrowing* it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew.[8]

They did not think of the working class as revolutionary "because they consider the proletarians as *gods*,"[9] or because they thought that workers could be convinced of socialism by revolutionary intellectuals. They assumed workers who were ground down by their life under capitalism. "Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole. . . ."[10]

What can be said of auto workers, then? That they were forced continually to overcome their limitations, to do battle with their union leaders and their government despite their patriotism and their prejudices. "There can be little question that if the total picture of national unity and the no-strike pledge had been presented to a democratic vote of the American working class it would have been roundly defeated."[11]

But what was the meaning of these struggles? Weren't they, after all, simply narrow strikes over economics and working conditions? I think that to deal with this it is necessary to go beyond the self-imposed limitations of traditional social science, to avoid "the obscurantism of pure empiricism."[12] The contradiction between being and consciousness has a corollary, the contradiction between objective and subjective reality.

It is necessary to draw a third conclusion from the events of World War II, that events have to be understood objectively rather than simply in terms of subjective motivation. When workers say that they are treated in a discriminatory way and they need improved working conditions or increased wages and that this does not contradict their desire that the United States win the war, that is an empirical fact. But if we limit ourselves to the perception of the participants we make a mockery of the study of historical events. When thousands of workers are striking for a variety of ends, all of them rather local and narrow, the accumulation of strikes makes for a qualitative change in the objective reality. Objectively it is a threat to the existing social structure, no matter what the participants believe. And if the government and other major institutions respond on that level then continuation and escalation of the strikes reinforces that threat. Taking into account the tendency toward exaggeration in political rhetoric, the attacks upon the working class by corporate

executives, Congressmen and Senators, and the Executive Branch of the government clearly posed an awareness of a subversive threat. This was buttressed by the introduction and passage of anti-labor legislation and anti-subversive legislation. Was this simply a way of using the war to weaken unions? Enriched by the hindsight of the post-Watergate exposures, it would be dangerous to conclude that that was all that was involved. At least in terms of the narrow concern of defending their own society and their own rule, at least some of the fears of working class activity must have been rooted in an accurate perception of where working class wildcats could lead. It is a strange and unfortunate reality that revolutionaries have historically had less confidence in the revolutionary capacity of the working class than have had the rulers of capitalist society.

In any case, the firings, the use of the draft against militants, arrests and harassments, were directed not against what workers thought but at what workers did. And, in turn, what workers thought was changed by what those in power did. The wildcat strikes were, in fact, political strikes because they were directed against the government. The government, through military and other personnel, made sure to make that clear.

In the end, not very much seemed to be changed. There were massive legal strikes at the end of the war. The unions emerged from the war infinitely more bureaucratized than they were at the beginning. The UAW moved rather quickly to end the factional divisions and turn power over to the one-party machine of Walter Reuther. The power of the workers within the union structure continued to erode. American capitalism did not seem very threatened as it moved into the Cold War.

However, it seems to me necessary to draw as much as possible, rather than as little as possible, out of the struggle over the no-strike pledge. As was noted earlier, such well-documented contradictions are rare enough in history. The narrower the interpretation, the more likely it is to be locked within the framework of acceptance of the status quo as an overriding given.

At the very least, certain negative conclusions can be drawn. The revolutionary potential of the working class is

not limited by day-to-day levels of activity or by the superficial consciousness of workers, singly or in groups. Workers often act in contradiction to their own statements of belief. Expressions of satisfaction with life (they are rare enough), patriotism, hostility to radicalism of a formal sort are totally useless in determining the future direction of American working class activity. The contradiction between being and consciousness is what produces change but it is change that tends to be sudden, explosive, and spontaneous.

There is no indication that I am aware of that thirty years later American workers have resolved their contradictions and have lost their revolutionary potential. If anything, the hostility to work, to politics, to government, among workers has become deeper and sharper than at any time since the Great Depression.*

There is a combination of elements involved in examining the reality of class, class consciousness, and class activity.† The need to generalize and to condense can lead to confusion and misunderstanding unless terms and their use are clearly understood.

When we talk about what a worker thinks, we are talking about something very specific. But no two workers think exactly alike or have identical work or life situations. So that when we talk about group or class consciousness we are not talking about simply generalizing from the individual (although examining an individual in depth can give us significant insights into the general). And we are not talking

*"There is now convincing evidence that some blue-collar workers are carrying their work frustrations home and displacing them in extremist social and political movements or in hostility toward the government." *Work in America*, Report of a Special Task Force to the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, undated (1973), page 30.

†"Proletarian class consciousness is, therefore, *the worker's consciousness of his social being as embedded in the necessary structural antagonism of capitalist society, in contrast to the contingency of group consciousness which perceives only a more or less limited part of the global confrontation.*" Istvan Meszaros, "Contingent and Necessary Class Consciousness," in *Aspects of History and Class Consciousness*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971, page 101. Emphasis in original.

about an average consciousness or about a total which adds up all the individual consciousnesses. We are talking about a very complex and changing reality.

A worker sits at home filling out his ballot on the no-strike pledge. He might be married or single, he might have relatives in the armed forces or not. He comes from a particular family, region, ethnic background, etc. He is, let us say, listening to the war news on the radio while he is examining his ballot. He may have doubts, he may be unsure, but hearing the casualty reports it might seem reasonable to him to support the pledge.

The next day, at work, his foreman tells him that they have temporarily run out of work for his machine and that he should grab a broom and keep busy by cleaning up the aisles. The worker resents an order to do unnecessary work just for appearances sake, talks to a few of his fellows, and walks off the job. There seems to him no contradiction between that attitude and his vote of the day before. After all, it was the foreman who caused the strike, not the worker.

If there were ten other workers involved, they may have had 10 different combinations of attitudes for joining the strike. These could range from aggressive militancy through a belief or sense of class solidarity to lack of interest or fear. One source of consciousness is simply the presence of other workers, that is, the visible signs of class. A worker, sitting at home, is a citizen (although he has many characteristics, even as a citizen, which are working class). The same worker, at work, or at a meeting, is part of a group and, unlike groups of lawyers, businessmen, students, etc., is compelled to think in group terms. His work requires it; and his life experience requires it. Georges Friedmann saw this in his critique of the famous Hawthorne experiment:

> Observing methodically a group of workers taken at random, the investigators are thus led to recognize that the mainspring of their inner, spontaneous, secret organization, of their personal inter-relations, and of their behavior inside the factory, is the defense of their collective economic conditions. They think they contribute most effectively to this — on the basis of a system of piece wages and bonuses — by restricting output. Such an attitude clearly implies a solidarity among workers which

> transcends individual psychological distinctions, antipathies, membership in such and such a group or clique and even, very often, their immediate financial interest. The practice of restriction of output, the recognition of a certain duration of work as a "norm of conduct," unites them more or less consciously into a collectivity surpassing the internal differences and limits of a firm, even one as vast as Western Electric. The investigators grasped the intrinsic importance of restriction of output, but did not see that here they confronted a socio-economic fact [Is it too much to add — political fact?] going beyond the company's horizon and relating the workers' attitude to that of other workers, in other factories, in other industries — in other regions, and even in other countries. Far from being explained by the purely internal factors of the firm, this phenomenon involves the economic and social conditions of the industrial wage worker within the total society to which he belongs.[13]

This is the irreducible minimum of class consciousness, from which leaps in consciousness and activity develop. But although it is always there, it is extremely difficult to record, or even see. An observer could spend a week, a month, or even a year in the department of a factory and see nothing but conflict, horseplay, and apathy among the workers. The production standards and modes of behavior would, of course, be taken for granted and assumed to stem from management decisions or some agreement by management and union that took place at some distance from the factory floor. The actual role of present and former workers in that department in establishing, or helping to establish, the reality of life and production in that department would not be visible. What the observer would see would be factually true, but fundamentally false because key elements of reality would be missing.

Another complication is the definition of class and the use of terms related to class. I do not want to present some final authoritative definition since that is not what is involved in this discussion. E. P. Thompson's definition is a useful place to start.

> By class I understand an historical phenomenon, unifying a number of disparate and seemingly unconnected

> events, both in the raw material of experience and in consciousness. I emphasize that it is an *historical* phenomenon. I do not see class as a "structure," nor even as a "category," but as something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships.[14]

"Class" is one of the most useful conceptions in social science. It is especially useful to Marxists. But it needs to be understood in all its complexity and "disparate and seemingly unconnected events." For example, one can say, "The workers went on strike"; or "The working class overthrew the Czarist government." There is an assumption of totality which is not contained in those sentences. *All* the workers, each and every last one of them, did not overthrow the Czar. *All* the workers, each and every one of them, did not go on strike, or, at least, did not want to. Is talk about "workers" and "working class" then only revolutionary rhetoric? I do not think so. I think these are valid uses of the terms — but they cannot be understood as absolutes, any more than, "The French people overthrew the monarchy," can be understood as an absolute.

In any group of workers, some are more active than others. There are many reasons for this: background, skill, family obligations, etc. Age is always an important factor. I have seen older workers discuss actions that needed to be taken to deal with certain problems, agreeing that a strike was needed, but noting that they were unable to initiate such action, that younger workers with fewer responsibilities would have to do it. That is a fairly general, although not absolute, pattern, for revolutions as well as strikes. It tends to be the young who initiate and lead. The older workers follow.

There are also numbers of workers who oppose militant or revolutionary activities but go along out of fear of reprisals. There are workers who are apathetic who either take part in strikes out of inertia or who simply go home to wait out the events. All these are part of the class and have to be assumed in discussing class activity and class consciousness.

What is crucial, however, is the role of the politically active and effective workers in initiating events and in bringing the majority of the class along. Again: "politically active

and effective" must be understood free of the myths of the old left. I have indicated above that by politically active and effective I do not mean (necessarily) union activists or people who are effective speakers or who otherwise relate to parliamentary institutions, in or out of the unions. A handful of workers can initiate a wildcat strike if they sense that a majority of the workers will go along and that those who will not go along will not be effective. Parliamentary majorities are not what is involved. Informal shop floor organizations and the dispersion of leadership among any group of workers is what is involved. Workers might choose a careerist type to represent them in the grievance procedure while choosing a young militant to represent them on a picket line. Leadership within the class is not a full-time job or the attribute of particular individuals. It is apportioned out depending on the tasks that need doing.

This is one of the reasons that opinion surveys are relatively useless in determining working class consciousness. Working class consciousness, as a guide to future activity, as an indication of revolutionary potential (apart from the fact that it changes from day to day), is not an average of what all workers believe, or a division of the class into proportions of 100. It is an historically developing reality made up of many elements. "The question," in the words of Marx and Engels, "is *what the proletariat is* and what, consequent on that *being*, it will be compelled to do."

Their *being* compelled auto workers (not to mention miners, mechanics, and others) to strike during World War II in violation of their patriotic sentiments. Their *being* and those strikes contributed to modifying their beliefs and limiting their patriotism. Abstractly, there were no limits to what American workers could do during the war. Concretely, I believe that the activities of workers were limited to wildcat strikes for two reasons.

One was the fact that sufficient concessions were made to prevent the lid from blowing off. An irregular pattern of concessions in response to some strikes, adjustments by the government, etc., both served to encourage further strikes and to discourage going beyond strikes. Physical police or military force against strikers tended to be used sparingly.

Two was the quick incorporation of the accumulated

militancy of the war years into major official strikes very shortly after the war ended. The General Motors strike led by Reuther in particular served to channelize the wartime militancy of the UAW.

As a conclusion to this discussion I would like to relate the wartime wildcat strikes to the two major postwar revolutionary events of the industrial world: the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and the French Revolt of 1968. Both began with student demonstrations and were transformed into social revolutions by the intervention of workers on a mass scale in wildcat actions that led, in Hungary, to the creation of workers councils and, in France, to the near destruction of the DeGaulle government. There was nothing in the observable consciousness or overt activity of either the French or Hungarian working classes that could possibly have led to a prediction of coming revolution. If anything, all the conditions led almost all observers to assume the reverse.

How, then, did these revolutions take place? The assumptions that would make those events intelligible, that would remove them from the category of historical accidents that are of no interest to observers, are the assumptions that I have tried to apply to the wartime wildcat strikes in the auto industry. They indicate, it seems to me, a fundamental class solidarity and a huge hidden reserve of consciousness and activity which can produce similar spontaneous outbursts on a vast social scale in the United States. This is not a prediction that these events *will* occur. It is, rather, a suggestion that those who are concerned with fundamental social change would do better to base themselves on a working class revolutionary potential than on the limited empirical evidence of the day-to-day.

REFERENCE NOTES

CHAPTER 1 (pages 1-15)

1. The source for this is many discussions with Jessie Glaberman, who was one of the pickets at Phillie Cigars. A similar switch in the middle of a meeting of the Wayne County CIO Council is described by Sam Sage, Oral History Interview, Wayne State University Archives on Labor and Urban Affairs, page 26.
2. *New York Times*, December 9, 1941.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, December 8, 1941. "With the outbreak of war on December 7, several strikes then in progress were immediately called off and several threatened strikes, even where strike votes had been taken, were cancelled." *Strikes in 1941 and Strikes Affecting Defense Production*, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin No. 711, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1942, page 1.
5. *New York Times*, December 8 and 9, 1941.
6. *Ibid.*, December 8, 1941.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, December 9, 1941.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, December 12, 1941.
12. *Ibid.*, December 16, 1941.
13. *Ibid.*, December 17, 1941.
14. *Ibid.*, December 18, 1941.
15. Joel Seidman, *American Labor from Defense to Reconversion*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953, pages 80-84.
16. *New York Times*, December 24, 1941.
17. *Ibid.*, December 8, 1941.
18. Minutes of the Meeting of the UAW-CIO Executive Board, March 28, 1942, Cleveland, Ohio. Addes Papers, Wayne State University Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs. Emphasis in original. See also Nelson M. Lichtenstein, *Industrial Unionism under the No-Strike Pledge: A Study of the CIO during the Second World War*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, undated, pages 251-252.

19. See Art Preis, *Labor's Giant Step*, New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1964, pages 152-153.
20. In an interview in 1976, McGill said that it was not George Addes, it was Victor Reuther. "Sometimes you mention a name and you mean somebody else, that's probably it. . . . It was Vic Reuther." Glaberman interview with John McGill, Francis "Jack" Palmer, and Lawrence Jones, Flint, Michigan, December 12, 1976. A rough transcript of this interview/discussion is now in the Glaberman Collection at the WSU Labor Archives.
21. No-strike clauses were already in UAW contracts at this time, although not with prohibitions as absolute as the war-time pledge.
22. John McGill, OHI-WSULA, pages 15-17.
23. Preis, *op. cit.*
24. Nelson Lichtenstein, "Defending the No-Strike Pledge: CIO Politics During World War II," *Radical America*, Volume 9, Numbers 4-5, July-August 1975, page 55. Footnotes in original omitted.
25. Norm Bully, OHI-WSULA, pages 14-17; John W. Anderson, OHI-WSULA, pages 58-60; Ted LaDuke, OHI-WSULA, page 29; Frank Marquart, OHI-WSULA, pages 20-28.
26. John W. Anderson, OHI-WSULA, pages 58-60; Ted LaDuke, OHI-WSULA, page 29.
27. Addes Collection 52A, Box 21, Folder: Minutes, WSULA.
28. For comparable developments in the different situation of Great Britain, see Angus Calder, *The People's War*, New York: Pantheon, 1969, especially pages 393-396.
29. Matthew Josephson, *Sidney Hillman: Statesman of American Labor*, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1952, page 481. This is a totally uncritical and rather stupid book. It has the advantage of exposing Hillman's role while trying to put him in the best light.
30. *Ibid.*, page 484.
31. *Ibid.*, pages 508-509.
32. *Ibid.*, page 580; Bert Cochran, *Labor and Communism*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977, page 158.
33. *Detroit News*, November 8, 1942.
34. See Lichtenstein, *op. cit.*, pages 54-55.

CHAPTER 2 (pages 16-34)

1. See "Statement by Edward L. Cushman, Director for Michigan, War Manpower Commission, to Special Senate Committee Investigating National Defense, March 9, 1945," in *Investigation of National Defense Program Part 28, Manpower Problems in Detroit, Hearings before Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program*, 79th Cong., 1st Sess., March 9-13, 1945, G.P.O., 1945 (hereinafter *Manpower Problems in Detroit*), page 13626.

2. See Barton J. Bernstein, "The Automobile Industry and the Coming of the Second World War," *Southwestern Social Science Quarterly*, Volume 47, Number 1, June 1966.
3. *Manpower Problems in Detroit*, page 13527.
4. There was also a slight counter-movement of working wives who quit jobs to increase their husbands' chances of deferment in the draft. See *New York Times*, February 6, 1942.
5. Lyn Goldfarb, *Separated & Unequal*, Washington, D.C.: URPE, undated (1976), page 12.
6. *Ibid.*, page 6. The source cited for this is Sheila Tobias and Lisa Anderson, "What Really Happened to Rosie the Riveter: Demobilization and the Female Labor Force 1945-1947," paper presented at Berkshire Conference, New Brunswick, N.J., March 2, 1973, page 6.
7. *Negro Women War Workers*, Bulletin No. 205, U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946, page iii.
8. *Ibid.*, page 18.
9. See the testimony of Robert G. Waldron, Director of Industrial Relations, Hudson Motor Car Co., page 13143, and Col. George E. Strong, Air Corps, Commanding Officer, Central District, Air Technical Service Command, page 13433, in *Manpower Problems in Detroit*.
10. "The U.A.W. leadership perceived this lack of trade union spirit to be a serious problem, and in the spring of 1944 established a Women's Bureau as part of the International's War Policy Division. . . . [T]he Bureau sought to investigate the indifference of women to union affairs, and hoped to encourage women to become active U.A.W. members.

    "This lack of union participation is difficult to understand in a city like Detroit where 51% of women working were employed before the war, and 78% intended to continue working when the war ended. . . .

    "An explanation may be found by examining women's dual role of worker and as homemaker." Goldfarb, *op. cit.*, pages 18-19.
11. "An auto local with 9,000 members in Chicago was unable for four or five months in a row to muster a quorum of 125 workers at a Sunday meeting." Sidney Lens, *Left, Right and Center*, Hinsdale, Ill.: Henry Regnery Company, 1949, page 340.
12. The experience of Jessie Glaberman.
13. Sam Sage, OHI-WSULA, page 32. His disbelief that women would wildcat in this way not only reflects the general sexism, it also reinforces it by defining these women, not as militant workers but as undisciplined workers who won't follow union procedures. See also *Manpower Problems in Detroit*, page 13620, for report of a

strike at the Chrysler Kercheval plant in defense of women's jobs; Joseph Pagano, OHI-WSULA, page 13; Leonard Woodcock, OHI-WSULA, page 27.

14. Jess Ferrazza, OHI-WSULA, page 22.
15. Ed Jennings, "Wildcat! The Wartime Strike Wave in Auto," *Radical America*, Volume 9, Numbers 4-5, July-August 1975, page 85.
16. See Norm Bully, OHI-WSULA, page 21.
17. Carl Bolton's career ended as strangely as it began. He returned to a career of crime. In the late fifties he and a confederate were convicted of robbery and sentenced to long terms at the state prison in Jackson.
18. Stan Weir, "American Labor on the Defensive: A 1940's Odyssey," *Radical America*, Volume 9, Numbers 4-5, July-August 1975, page 177.
19. *Ibid.*, page 169. The title of this piece, "American Labor on the Defensive," indicates the limited view that Weir has of workers, whom he tends to see through organizational blinders.

CHAPTER 3 (pages 35-61)

1. See Cochran, *op. cit.*, page 163.
2. Joseph Pagano, OHI-WSULA, pages 30-32; James Couser, OHI-WSULA, page 18; Richard Frankensteen, *Manpower Problems in Detroit*, page 13414.
3. *Manpower Problems in Detroit*, pages 13557-13558.
4. Orrin H. Peppler, OHI-WSULA, page 19. Peppler did not recall any strikes at Buell Die and Machine Co. However, Romney reported a wildcat there. *Manpower Problems in Detroit*, page 13600.
5. Leonard Woodcock, OHI-WSULA, pages 24-25.
6. *Manpower Problems in Detroit*, page 13404.
7. Leonard Woodcock, OHI-WSULA, page 26.
8. Leonard E. Klue, OHI-WSULA, pages 22-23.
9. Edward Purdy, OHI-WSULA, page 14.
10. Sam Sage, OHI-WSULA, page 32.
11. *Ibid.*, page 34.
12. Jess Ferrazza, OHI-WSULA, page 17.
13. *Ibid.*, pages 15-16.
14. F. D. "Jack" Palmer, OHI-WSULA, page 33.
15. *Ibid.*, pages 34-35.
16. Norm Bully, OHI-WSULA, pages 22-23.
17. *Ibid.*, page 23.
18. *Manpower Problems in Detroit*, page 13433.
19. *Ibid.*, pages 13286-13287.
20. *Ibid.*, pages 13300-13301.
21. *Ibid.*, pages 13301-13302.

22. *Ibid.*, pages 13302-13303. "Government statistics do not reflect the true picture of the times since they do not include the thousands and thousands of one-hour and three-hour stoppages that occurred throughout the country, without workers even leaving the plant." Sidney Lens, *op. cit.*, pages 355-356.
23. Leonard Woodcock described a case where Air Force officers dealt with women strikers by isolating them and bullying them one by one, OHI-WSULA, page 27; Sam Sage reported on his collaboration with military intelligence in a potential strike situation, OHI-WSULA, page 35.
24. See Jess Ferrazza, OHI-WSULA, pages 16-17, and John Anderson, OHI-WSULA, page 106.

CHAPTER 4 (pages 62-81)

1. "The outbreak of war completed the destruction of the Socialist Party as a political entity." Daniel Bell, *Marxian Socialism in the United States*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967, page 180.
2. Interview with Bob Travis by Ken Lawrence, July 28, 1976.
3. See Joel Seidman, "Labor Policy of the Communist Party During World War II," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, Volume 4, Number 1, October 1950.
4. Volume XX, Number 7. This article appeared after the German invasion of Russia, an embarrassment occasioned by the necessarily leisurely pace of monthly publication.
5. *Ibid.*, page 581.
6. Volume XX, Number 10, pages 851-2. This article was unsigned, indicating the status of a policy editorial. Emphasis in original.
7. *Ibid.*, page 855.
8. *Ibid.*, page 865. In the *Daily Worker* the contrast appeared on successive days. An editorial in the *Sunday Worker* of June 22, 1941 noted: "President Roosevelt's message to Congress brings American-German relations nearer to that climax, toward which both Hitler and the White House have been steadily moving.

   "The message is merely one more act in that 'one step after another' system pursued by the Administration, which is leading toward a break in diplomatic relations and heading toward armed conflict. . . .

   "The imperialistic stakes for which the White House and the Wilhelmstrasse are playing offer no benefit to the people. Those people want none of this war. They will have to state this strongly, to stay the hand of the war crowd."

   The front page of the *Daily Worker* of June 23, 1941 was devoted entirely to support of the Soviet Union after the invasion and very quickly the CP couldn't get the U.S. into the war quickly enough.

9. *Wage Policy in War Production*, New York: Workers Library Publishers, April 1943, page 8.
10. Preis, *Labor's Giant Step*, page 222.
11. June 19, 1944.
12. Quoted in Lens, *op. cit.*, page 344. Bob Travis notes that incentive pay policy "may have been a mistake on our part. Maybe we shouldn't have been so gung-ho on production during the war, because I think that tactic lost a lot of support. . . .

    "What about the piece rate that you were telling me about? Did that actually get established in the war industries?

    "No.

    "It was just the party's thing?

    "Yes. It lost out, too. Wherever the hell they had piece rates throughout the industry, they were still struggling to get rid of the goddam things. And we should have helped them get rid of them. . . .

    "What kind of arguments did the party people make for that line?

    "I don't know. 'Unity,' I guess, and 'win the war for the poor Russian guys.' Production, that's all, that's what they wanted." Ken Lawrence interview, July 28, 1976.
13. See Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, *The American Communist Party*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1957, chapter IX.
14. George Morris, "The Trotskyite Fifth Column in the Labor Movement," *The Communist*, Volume XXIII, Number 8, August 1944. "The July issue of the *International Teamster* reprints a substantial section of this writer's column in the *Daily Worker* exposing the Trotskyites.

    "The straightforward stand of this union that Trotskyites are on par with enemy spies and saboteurs and should be treated as such is a timely advice to other organizations." *Ibid.*, page 717. See also Joseph R. Starobin, *American Communism in Crisis, 1943-1957*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972, pages 46-47, 12.
15. OHI-WSULA, page 28. "Even Phil Murray accused them of 'excessive appeasement of anti-labor forces.'" Lens, *op. cit.*, page 344. See also Howe and Coser, *op. cit.*, page 409.
16. *The Social Basis of American Communism*, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1974.
17. *Ibid.*, page 92.
18. *Ibid.*, page 209. Joseph Starobin has a somewhat different assessment: "By the midpoint of the Second World War, American Communism had reached its zenith in numbers, and its influence far exceeded its own strength. From 7,000 members in 1930, the Communists could point to nearly 100,000 members, which included some 15,000 in the armed forces (many of them former members of the recently dissolved Young Communist League." Starobin,

op. cit., page 21. It is my belief that Starobin's figures are inflated. However, if they include YCL members and not only those members who registered and paid dues, it might be reasonably accurate — understanding that the larger the figure, the lesser the significance, since the larger figure would include marginal, less disciplined, and less effective members.

19. *Ibid.*, page 115.
20. Cochran, *op. cit.*, page 208.
21. "The Party Recruiting Campaign in Michigan," *The Communist*, Volume XXII, Number 4, April 1943.
22. Glazer, *op. cit.*, page 116. "By the middle of the war, the character of the membership was changing, with a significant influx of white-collar workers, professionals, and even business men, together with an increase in the working class membership, which the Party deemed essential and distinctive. Some characteristics of the fifteen thousand new members who came in during 1943 are worth noting. Whereas at the end of the previous year, 43 percent of the Party's membership consisted of industrial workers, 62 percent of the 1943 recruits were in this category. In 1942, half of the membership had been trade unionists; in 1943 this number rose to 56 percent. Just below a quarter were in 'basic industries.'" Starobin, *op. cit.*, page 24.
23. *Ibid.*, page 117.
24. Starobin, *op. cit.*, page 38.
25. *Ibid.*, page 28.
26. See Cochran, *op. cit.*, pages 244-247.
27. See Felix Morrow, "Lenin's Teachings on National Wars," *Fourth International*, Volume III, Number 4, April 1942.
28. Art Preis, "The Wailing Liberals," *Fourth International*, Volume III, Number 7, July 1942, page 201.
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30. James P. Cannon, *Socialism on Trial*, New York: Pioneer Publishers, March 1949, page 43.
31. *Labor Action*, June 30, 1941.
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34. M.S., "The Strange Silence of the Militant," *Ibid.*, January 12, 1942.
35. Jack Wilson (B. J. Widick), "Labor in the War," *The New International*, Volume 8, Number 1, February 1942, page 15.
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37. *Ibid.*, pages 236-237.
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39. Max Shachtman, "The Progressives at the UAW Convention," *ibid.*, October 25, 1943.

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1. Elizabeth McCracken, OHI-WSULA, page 2. This is the main source of information for this section.
2. John W. Anderson, OHI-WSULA, pages 39-41. (This is not the same John Anderson who is referred to in the text.)
3. Elizabeth McCracken, OHI-WSULA, page 13.
4. John W. Anderson, OHI-WSULA, page 41. Bert Cochran, in the World War II years, became the leading trade union strategist of the SWP. He left to form his own group in the 1950s.
5. Elizabeth McCracken, OHI-WSULA, pages 35-36.
6. Elizabeth McCracken, OHI-WSULA, page 3.
7. *Newsweek*, February 21, 1944, page 69.
8. Frank Marquart, *An Autoworker's Journal*, University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975, page 56.
9. *Detroit News*, November 9, 1942, page 5.
10. The *Free Press* was not above lying. This last "quote" is an obvious distortion of something Smith often said, that labor had a chance to exploit the wartime labor shortage.
11. *Detroit Free Press*, February 7, 1944. See also *Free Press*, November 8, 1942, February 8 and 10, 1944; *Detroit News*, November 10, 1942, February 8 and 11, 1944.
12. *Detroit News*, November 9, 1942.
13. McCracken, OHI-WSULA, pages 33-35.
14. *Manpower Problems in Detroit*, pages 13246-13253.
15. *Newsweek*, February 14, 1944, page 67.
16. *Ibid.*, February 14 and 21, 1944. See also *Detroit Free Press*, *Detroit News*, *Detroit Times*, February 5-12, 1944.
17. For an interesting comparison with miners in wartime Britain, see Angus Calder, *op. cit.*, pages 431-443.
18. J. R. Sperry, "Rebellion Within the Ranks: Pennsylvania Anthracite, John L. Lewis, and the Coal Strikes of 1943," *Pennsylvania History*, July 1973, page 293. Saul D. Alinsky, in *John L. Lewis*, New York: Vintage Books, 1970, chapter 12, "Lewis *vs.* the People," gives the starting date as two weeks after the New Year. Art Preis, in *ibid.*, chapter 18, "How the Miners Won," gives the date as January 2, 1943.
19. Sperry, *op. cit.*, page 294.
20. *Ibid.*, page 282.

21. *Ibid.*, page 174.
22. *Ibid.*, pages 294-295.
23. *Ibid.*, page 305.
24. Lens, *op. cit.*, page 358.
25. Alinsky, *op. cit.*, page 296.
26. Preis, *op. cit.*, page 182.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*, page 183.
29. *Ibid.*, page 184.

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3. *Labor Action*, May 31, 1943.
4. *New York Times*, March 27, 1943.
5. *Ibid.*, March 20 and April 3, 1943.
6. *Ibid.*, April 20, 1943.
7. *Proceedings of the Eighth Convention, 1943, of the UAW*, page 115.
8. *Labor Action*, August 2, 1943.
9. *Ibid.*, December 21, 1942 and January 11, 1943.
10. *Ibid.*, July 12, 1943.
11. *Proceedings of the Eighth Convention, 1943, of the UAW*, pages 403-414.
12. Martin Harvey (Martin Glaberman), "Michigan CIO Leaders Move for Labor Party," *Labor Action*, January 3, 1944.
13. Preis, *op. cit.*, pages 246-247; L. Smith, "The Michigan Commonwealth Federation," *The New International*, Volume X, Number 6, June 1944, pages 178-182; *Labor Action*, March 20 and 27, 1944.
14. Preis, *op. cit.*
15. *New York Times*, March 9, 10, and 16, 1944; Preis, *op. cit.*, page 228; *Labor Action*, March 20 and April 3, 1944.
16. Martin Harvey, "Lowdown on the Chrysler Strike," *Labor Action*, June 5, 1944.
17. Preis, *op. cit.*, pages 230-231.
18. M. Harvey, "Michigan CIO Retreats from Its 1943 Militancy," *Labor Action*, July 24, 1944.
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22. *Ibid.*, October 9, 1944.
23. *Labor Action*, September 11, 1944.

24. *Proceedings*, 9th Convention of the UAW, pages 56-59.
25. *Ibid.*, pages 147-148.
26. *Ibid.*, pages 149-151. The reference in the last section is to proposals from Earl Browder and Harry Bridges.
27. *Ibid.*, pages 153-154.
28. *Ibid.*, page 468.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*, page 221.
31. Minutes of the International Executive Board meeting, October 1-6, 1944, Addes Papers, WSULA, Box 23, Folder: Minutes.
32. *Rank and Filer*, January 1945, page 2, WSULA.
33. *Labor Action*, December 4, 1944.
34. *New York Times*, February 10, 25, 26, and 27, 1944.
35. *Ibid.*, March 1-6, 1945; *Labor Action*, March 12, 1945.
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39. See Table 15, page 118.
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41. *Rank and Filer*, April 1945.
42. Preis, *op. cit.*, page 236.
43. *Monthly Labor Review*, May 1945, page 961.
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1. T. Lupton, *On the Shop Floor*, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1963, page 202. "Finite principles are the most that understanding can pick out — and these being essentially unstable and tottering, the structure they supported must collapse with a crash." G. W. F. Hegel, *The Logic of Hegel*, London: Oxford University Press, 1892, page 79.
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3. *Ibid.*, page 171. Emphasis in original. "Contradiction is the root of all movement and life, and it is only in so far as it contains a Contradiction that anything moves and has impulse and activity." G. W. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1951, Volume 2, page 67.
4. ". . . opportunism *mistakes the actual, psychological state of consciousness of proletarians for the class consciousness of the proletariat.*" Georg Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness*, London:

Merlin Press, 1971, page 74. Emphasis in original.

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6. Marx made clear in *Capital* that, "Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole, *i.e.*, on the side of the class that produces its own product in the form of capital." Moscow: Progress Publishers, undated, Volume 1, page 604. This was no idealistic view of how workers could escape the effects of capitalist domination. But with the recognition that there "grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working-class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself." *Ibid.*, page 715.
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